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1 February 2019

Mr Dan Harding  
Headteacher  
Stockton Heath Primary School  
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Warrington  
Cheshire  
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Dear Mr Harding

### **Short inspection of Stockton Heath Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 22 January 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in January 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Together with the senior leaders and staff, you have ensured that the school's learning environment is vibrant and exciting. High-quality displays around the school celebrate pupils' learning. The quality of art work around the school is testament to the wide curriculum on offer. Pupils engage in a wide range of art-based learning, which includes model making, charcoal drawing, textiles and painting. Many of these wonderful displays are enriched with examples of high-quality writing, for example work inspired by the local author Lewis Carroll in relation to 'Alice in Wonderland'. Pupils know what it means to be patient, courageous and kind. Pupils are proud of the qualities and values that they have identified within their school.

Since the previous inspection, the results of national tests show that pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has remained high in comparison with the national average, both at key stages 1 and 2. In 2018, the progress that pupils made in mathematics by the end of Year 6 was well above the national average.

You work closely with the senior leaders and have created a detailed school development plan that sets out key areas to continue to improve the school. Your self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the school is incisive and honest.

Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school. Those that I spoke to before the inspection and those who responded to the Ofsted surveys

overwhelmingly stated that they would recommend this school to others. Parents were very positive in their views about the behaviour and safety of the pupils in the school. Parents voiced very confident opinions about the leadership of the school. They stated that you and the staff were visible and approachable each day. Parents appreciate the 15 minutes they have each morning when they can drop their children off at school, alleviating traffic congestion. One view, typical of many, said that 'The staff in the school have given my children wings to fly.'

The behaviour of the pupils continues to be a strength of the school. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They move around the school calmly and behave very well during lessons. As a result, little learning time is lost. Pupils said that you are very good at dealing with very rare instances of bullying or name-calling. They have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe while online. For example, they know not to share their personal information. Pupils appreciate that you have made a prayer and reflection area for their use. They enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities that are on offer, some of which include Zumba dancing, choir, art, football and athletics. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about some of their favourite trips and residential visits. They have a strong understanding of what is meant by a democracy. For example, older pupils explained that democracy was founded on Ancient Greek principles. They have a deep understanding of tolerance and what it means to be a British citizen.

Governors are supportive of the school. They are well informed about the strengths and areas that need to be further developed. Governors have a good understanding of how the additional funding through the pupil premium is used to benefit current disadvantaged pupils. The number of disadvantaged pupils attending the school is increasing each year. Governors are beginning to adapt their plans to better reflect the changing nature of the school population in order to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make even stronger progress. Governors have ensured that additional funding is used effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Governors balance the challenge and support they offer you well.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and ensure that writing was challenging enough for the most able pupils. Since then, you have been proactive in your pursuit of better standards of writing and presentation across the curriculum. You have put a range of successful measures in place to improve pupils' writing outcomes across the school. For example, you have targeted support effectively, ensuring that groups of pupils who were middle prior attaining at key stage 1 have made excellent progress. Teachers focus on the application of grammar, spelling and punctuation in pupils' writing tasks. Pupils across the school benefit from age-appropriate prompts and targets to help them improve and refine their work. Systems for editing and self-correcting are well embedded among the pupils. Strong writing habits begin in the early years. Children have many opportunities to apply their writing across different areas of learning. Together with the senior leaders and the English leader, you have made careful checks on the quality of writing. Standards of handwriting and presentation are strong across the school. From looking in pupils' books and observing teaching

and learning, it is clear to see that pupils in key stage 2 are challenged effectively in their writing. However, pupils in key stage 1 do not have enough regular opportunities to develop their writing at length.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Together with the designated lead for safeguarding, you have ensured that systems in place to safeguard pupils are highly effective. You have made careful checks on the suitability of adults who work in the school. You, several staff and governors have received training in safer recruitment. All staff have received basic awareness of safeguarding and 'Prevent' training, which enables them to spot signs of potential radicalisation.

Members of staff that I spoke to were alert and vigilant in their safeguarding duties. You work successfully with several external agencies to provide support to pupils and vulnerable families. You keep detailed records of your work to keep children safe. You have successfully worked with a local supermarket to improve congestion and traffic volume around the school site, therefore alleviating many of the associated dangers.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, I focused on three lines of enquiry. The first of these was in relation to the support provided to pupils with SEND. You have put clear processes in place to identify pupils with SEND. For example, when children enter the early years, they are assessed carefully as part of their baseline assessment. The special educational needs (SENCo) coordinator has ensured that plans, outlining additional support, are detailed and fit for purpose. Each pupil has specific, measurable targets. Teaching assistants receive training to enable them to support pupils highly effectively. Along with the SENCo, you have ensured that all additional support is of a high quality. You make careful checks on the progress that pupils make. From looking at samples of pupils' work and information about pupils' progress, I could see that pupils make good progress across the curriculum.
- The second area that I focused on during this inspection related to the teaching of reading. Since the previous inspection, you have continued to modify and adapt the way reading is taught. You have provided teachers with the training and skills necessary to plan exciting lessons that build successfully on pupils' prior learning. You organise taught reading sessions so that every pupil is on task and little learning time is lost. Your own recent monitoring of reading recognised that more work needed to be done to improve pupils' reading for understanding. As a result, teachers now carefully question pupils about their reading, checking that they fully understand the deeper meaning of the text. Pupils have a good understanding about different types of books and texts; they discuss their reading habits confidently. Pupils who read to me had books that were matched accurately to their ability. They were able to discuss their favourite stories and authors. You have promoted reading strongly across the school. The new fiction library is used regularly by pupils. These many positive changes have improved

pupils' progress in reading by the end of key stage 2 but it continues to be lower than the higher levels of progress that pupils achieve in mathematics.

- The final area that I focused on during the inspection related to attendance. For several years, attendance has been in line with the national average. Since the previous inspection, you now insist that all permissions for absences must be requested from the headteacher. You have made this change because you have noticed that an increasing number of families continue to take pupils out of school without authorisation. To resolve this, you work very closely with the educational welfare officer to promote attendance and work with vulnerable families. Pupils in the school enjoy competing for the award of best attending class. Current school attendance is better than the national average.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils in key stage 1 are provided with further opportunities to develop their ability to write at length
- they embed the changes to improve progress in reading even further in line with progress in mathematics
- they continue to adapt their plans to promote strong progress for the increasing number of disadvantaged pupils who attend school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Warrington. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Donald  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you and the senior leadership team. I held a meeting with five members of the governing body including the chair of governors. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. Together, we visited classes in each key stage, we spoke to pupils about their learning and viewed examples of their work. I spoke to pupils at lunchtime and heard a group of pupils from key stage 1 and 2 read. I spoke to parents on the playground before the inspection.

I scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including the school's single central safeguarding record. I examined school assessment information and documentation about pupils with SEND. I examined the school's development plan

and self-evaluation. I considered the 91 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 55 free-text responses. I considered the 30 responses to the staff survey and the 110 responses to the pupil survey.