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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Richard Thorpe
Headteacher
Grange Park Primary School
Grange Avenue
Stirchley
Telford
TF3 1FA

Dear Mr Thorpe

Short inspection of Grange Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in July 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school joined the Community Academies Trust (CAT) in April 2016 and you continued in the role of headteacher. You and other leaders are determined that pupils will receive a good standard of education. Together, you are an aspirational team of leaders who have high expectations of the pupils at the school. Leaders ensure that pupils' personal, social and emotional well-being is of equal importance to their academic progress. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school, where they learn and achieve well.

Leaders have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Your improvement plans include appropriate actions to further develop the quality of teaching and improve pupils' outcomes. Most pupils make at least good progress in a range of subjects across the curriculum. Over the last two years the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in writing at the end of key stage 1 was below the proportion that achieved it in reading and mathematics. Pupils' books show that they often practise their writing skills and are making good progress.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the culture of the school. Those who responded to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire said that they are proud to work at the school, where they feel respected and valued. They strongly agree that pupils are safe at the school. In addition, they all agree that all pupils are encouraged and supported to do their best.

At the inspection of the predecessor school, leaders were asked to improve the

quality of teaching of writing, to ensure that teachers' explanations are clear and that no time in lessons is wasted. You have provided effective training for all staff to ensure that they have strong subject knowledge. In addition, you have provided training about moving pupils on as soon as they are ready and about providing the correct level of challenge for pupils of all abilities. Leaders' records of their checks on the quality of teaching are thorough and provide information about what is done well and what could be further improved. You were also asked to provide more opportunities for pupils who have speech and language targets to practise their speaking skills. Teachers and teaching assistants pose questions and encourage discussions regularly during lessons. Furthermore, pupils benefit from specific interventions that focus on developing their communication skills.

Leaders were also asked to use their expertise in early years education to support local providers. You have achieved this through successful partnerships with other schools in the multi-academy trust.

Governors are highly committed to the school. They share your determination to bring about further improvement. Governors provide appropriate support and challenge for leaders. They make regular visits to the school to find out about the quality of education for themselves. Consequently, they have a sound understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement.

Most parents are supportive of the school. Parents who I spoke to during the inspection and many of those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school. Parents praise the friendly, approachable staff and the care that their children receive. They agreed that their children are happy to come to school. A small number of parents expressed concerns about how well the school deals with bullying. During the inspection I did not find any evidence that pupils are unhappy. All of the pupils I spoke to and those who completed Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire said that an adult had dealt effectively with any bullying that had happened in the past. In addition, all pupils are confident that if they had any worries, including about bullying, that they could talk to an adult about it.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All staff have up-to-date child protection training and they receive regular updates. As a result, they are knowledgeable about their safeguarding responsibilities, including how to report any concerns that they have. Leaders carry out thorough pre-employment checks on all staff.

Child protection records are well organised and stored securely. Leaders have good professional relationships with a range of agencies including social care, the police and family support workers. The school seeks to provide additional support for families, where appropriate, to improve the well-being of pupils.

Pupils say that the school helps them to learn about how to stay safe and to lead healthy lives. They understand how to use the internet safely and they are aware of

the danger that strangers can pose. They talk confidently about eating healthily and taking part in regular exercise.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was about the quality of teaching in key stage 1. We agreed a focus on writing because over the last two years attainment in writing has been below the national average. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and they use this to plan lessons that are well matched to typical age-related standards in Year 1 and Year 2.
- Pupils frequently practise their writing in a range of subjects across the curriculum. Pupils' books show that most make good progress with different aspects of writing, including letter formation, sentence structure and in their use of descriptive vocabulary. Teachers plan tasks that allow pupils to develop their understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling rules. Sometimes pupils do not apply this knowledge when they complete independent writing tasks and they make repeated errors. This can result in some pupils not making the progress they need to reach the standard of which they are capable.
- I also wanted to find out what leaders are doing to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress in key stage 2 in reading and writing. Through pupil progress meetings, you ensure that teachers know the starting points of every pupil in their class. Teachers plan lessons that build on what pupils already know and can do. Pupils' books show that they often write for sustained periods of time. Writing tasks are varied and are usually linked to the topics that pupils are studying or the texts they are reading. For example, pupils in Year 6 were inspired to produce descriptions about the Northern Lights as part of their work on the topic of The Titanic. In Year 5 pupils were writing detailed crime scene reports linked to 'The Highwayman', their class text. Teachers have high expectations of the work that pupils will produce and the vocabulary they will include in their writing. Most make good progress in writing.
- You have made developing pupils' love of reading a priority for the whole school. Pupils have daily opportunities to read and are also encouraged to read at home. Leaders ensure that whole-class texts used in English lessons are of high quality and that pupils acquire the skills they need to analyse and explain what they have read. Pupils told me that they have access to a wide range of books, both fiction and non-fiction, linked to their topics.
- My final key line of enquiry was about how well leaders use additional funding to support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. You have a secure understanding of the barriers that many of the disadvantaged pupils in the school face. Leaders ensure that plans for how the pupil premium funding will be spent target these specific barriers. In addition, leaders track the progress that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make in a range of subjects across the curriculum. Interventions are swiftly put into place when any pupil is at risk of falling behind. The school's assessment information and pupils' books show that disadvantaged pupils make similar rates of progress to other pupils in all subjects across the curriculum. Pupils' books also show that there are no

differences in teachers' expectations for disadvantaged pupils.

- Over the last two years, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent from school has been higher than that of other pupils. You ensure that leaders are doing all they can to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportion of pupils reaching at least the expected standard in writing increases at the end of key stage 1.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing board and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Telford and Wrekin. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jo Evans
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, parents and governors. I met with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust. We visited classrooms and looked at pupils' work together. I carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work with members of the senior leadership team. I also met with a group of pupils. I reviewed the school's website and documents including the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks and child protection systems. I also reviewed the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and monitoring information, and pupils' progress and assessment information. I took account of the 36 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also took account of the 54 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and the 17 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.