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Mrs Kathryn Marney
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Marney

Short inspection of Burnley Ightenhill Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 2018, 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 December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Under your strong, confident leadership, the school continues to grow and thrive. Everyone in the school strives to live up to the school motto, 'To be the best that we can be'. You have created a school community that is both caring and nurturing. Children are rightly proud of their school and feel the strong 'sense of belonging' that has been created and is a strong feature. This is a real accomplishment considering that yours is a large and growing school. Together with the leadership team, you work determinedly to improve pupils' achievement and to ensure that they flourish, both academically and personally.

The very large majority of parents and carers with whom I spoke, or who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, or the school's parent survey, are very positive about the school and would recommend it to others. Many said their children enjoyed coming to school and that staff are 'approachable and caring'. Most said that they are kept well informed about the progress their children make and there is regular communication between the school and them. Parents particularly liked some of the opportunities they had to be involved in school life. A highlight was the evening event, 'Under the stars', held in January.

All staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire are proud to be part of Burnley Ightenhill and enjoy working at the school. Most feel that the school is well led and managed, with leaders taking time to make sure that staff are treated with respect and are kept motivated. Staff share your vision and aspirations and there is a strong sense of the staff team working to achieve the very best for pupils.

At the previous inspection, inspectors identified a need to improve the progress of pupils further by ensuring that teachers match tasks more closely to pupils' different abilities. Inspectors also identified that middle leaders needed to be more involved in the monitoring and improvement of teaching and learning throughout the school. Finally, in mathematics, you were asked to ensure that pupils, especially the most able, were given opportunities to use their numeracy skills to solve mathematical problems. You have tackled these areas of development with a large degree of success.

Assessment information is used by leaders and class teachers to plan interesting and engaging activities for pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are effective in the way they ask the right questions to support pupils' understanding and draw out their learning. This has ensured that activities and learning are more closely matched to pupils' needs. There has been a significant improvement in the leadership team's involvement and accountability in all aspects of school improvement. You are ably assisted in this by an enthusiastic and dynamic senior leadership team. All leaders contribute to the good capacity the school has to continue to improve.

Pupils are given the opportunity to use their numeracy skills to solve some mathematical problems. However, I agree with you that this could be developed further. Wider than mathematics, pupils are not always being given the opportunity to apply their skills. This does not support them to develop a deeper understanding and sureness of what they are learning. As a result, pupils, including some of the most able and disadvantaged pupils, are not making the gains of which they are capable.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the staff team have ensured that pupils are safe and secure by promoting the clear message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Detailed safeguarding records are rigorously kept and regularly reviewed to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. Staff and governors undertake appropriate, frequent and up-to-date training. This includes training related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism. Your vigilance, and that of the leadership team, regarding the care and support of vulnerable pupils is a strength. Leaders have extremely effective relationships with external agencies and are instrumental in contributing to the safeguarding of vulnerable pupils. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Pupils say that they feel very safe and well cared for in the school. They feel confident that adults will help them if needed. Pupils talk with knowledge about the ways they can stay safe in a range of situations, including personally and online. The very large majority of parents feel that you and the staff keep children safe and looked after well.

Inspection findings

- One of the areas I explored with you was the work to ensure that as many pupils as possible achieve at greater depth and higher standards. You and the staff team have worked successfully to adapt to the new national curriculum. You have established firm foundations in learning for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are benefiting from good teaching, which has focused on closing gaps in their learning and giving pupils skills and frameworks to be successful learners. Consequently, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard, particularly in writing and at the end of key stage 2, in English and mathematics, significantly improved in 2017 compared with 2016.
- You and your leadership team now feel that the next step is to focus on the proportion of pupils reaching higher standards. You have already started this work by increasing the level of difficulty of some of the reading texts. You are tracking the progress of the most able pupils more closely. However, it is early days and the impact of this work is not yet fully evident. I agree with you that pupils need more opportunities to be challenged and to practise their skills and deepen their understanding. An example of missing opportunities to practise skills was seen in early years, where children's learning in the morning was not sufficiently built upon in the afternoon. In addition, older pupils are not using their numeracy skills as often as they could to tackle more complex mathematical problems.
- Another area I explored was how you support disadvantaged pupils to make all the gains of which they are capable. Disadvantaged pupils are a large group within the school. You offer a range of support to help those who need to catch up as quickly as possible. As a result, the proportion of these pupils attaining at the expected standard in English and mathematics doubled from 2016 to 2017. You carefully track these pupils' progress. However, despite the improvements in their outcomes, I agree with you that disadvantaged pupils could achieve even more.
- Pupils' grasp of phonics was another line of enquiry. The drop in the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in 2017 was due to circumstances beyond the school's control. This dip belies the strength in phonics teaching across early years and key stage 1, with children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 showing good progress towards meeting expected standards for their age.
- A fourth line of enquiry was pupils' attendance and behaviour. Overall attendance is comparable to the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is higher than average. Pupils whose attendance is less frequent are identified quickly and monitored as part of the school's safeguarding and pastoral support. As a result, the proportion of pupils persistently absent has reduced considerably compared with last year. The inclusion manager and attendance manager work closely together. They provide good-quality liaison between families, school and professionals, who offer support to those who need it. In the past, you have had a higher than average proportion of pupils subject to a fixed-term exclusion. Pleasingly, this has significantly reduced, and although there have been two fixed-term exclusions this year, these pupils have been well

supported with their learning and behavioural needs. As a result, they are now succeeding in school.

- Finally, we agreed to identify some of the other strengths of the school. One of these is the broad and interesting curriculum you offer. Pupils are 'hooked' into their learning by asking them questions they have to investigate. For example, 'What was it like to be a slave?', or 'Can I pick up ice with string and salt?' Pupils love science and physical education, but also say that they enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as in sports competition, the choir and the brass band.
- Another strength is the pastoral support for pupils. Adults know pupils extremely well and are very attentive to pupils' emotional well-being. If needed, pupils are offered informal chats through activities, such as 'talking and drawing', gardening club or more formal opportunities, such as play therapy or time with the school councillor. As a result, pupils know that they always have someone to whom they can turn. They know they are listened to and valued.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to raise the attainment and accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils
- teachers continue to develop ways to challenge pupils and to apply their skills, especially those who are most able, so they have a deeper and enduring understanding of what they are learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Eastwood
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, and the deputy and assistant headteachers. I met with the person responsible for maintaining safeguarding records, the attendance manager and the inclusion manager. I met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body, and I also met with a representative of the local authority. You and I visited lessons and I scrutinised pupils' workbooks. I took account of the 13 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views of parents who talked with me at the start of the school day. I also looked at the responses from the school's recent parent survey. I took account of the 20 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and spoke with staff during the day. I met with a small group of pupils. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. I looked at school documents including: information about pupils' achievement; the school's self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; behaviour and incident logs; and documents relating to safeguarding.

