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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Sharon Edwards
Headteacher
Greenleas Primary School
Green Lane
Wallasey
Merseyside
CH45 8LZ

Dear Mrs Edwards

Short inspection of Greenleas Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 February 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You provide very clear and strong direction for the school. You have high expectations of staff and pupils and a determination to maintain and build on the school's successes. You are supported in this by experienced and effective senior leaders and by a team of dedicated middle leaders. Regular and thorough evaluations of performance give you an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and ensure that you focus on the right priorities for improvement. Your school development plan and department plans are detailed and focused. However, your targets are not always precise enough. For example, when you say that you intend to improve outcomes for a particular group of pupils, you do not say by how much or by when.

The governors are very committed to the school. They have conducted a detailed analysis of their own skills and expertise, so that they can make best use of them and develop them further. They provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge to you and your staff. Governors pay regular visits to the school to look at work, talk to staff and pupils and to check on progress towards achieving the school's aims. As a result, they know the school well. They make appropriate use of the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and to develop physical education (PE) and sports in the school. However, the plans for these areas do not include clear criteria for assessing the precise impact of the actions taken.

The great majority of staff are very positive about the school, as are the parents and carers. The pupils who spoke to me all said that they feel happy at the school. In lessons, the pupils worked with interest and enthusiasm and only occasionally did they lose concentration. They also behaved well around the school, showing respect for each other, the staff and their environment.

At the time of the last inspection, leaders were asked to: improve attainment and progress in English and mathematics; give pupils of all abilities the right challenge and guidance on how to improve their work; provide pupils with more opportunities to work collaboratively and independently of the teacher; develop the role of the subject leaders.

You and your colleagues have addressed each of these areas systematically. The proportions of seven- and eleven-year-olds reaching the expected levels for their age have been consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics for the last three years. However, the proportions exceeding expectations have been inconsistent, especially where middle- and high-ability pupils are concerned. The progress that pupils make has also varied between subjects. For example, in 2017 progress was above average in writing and mathematics but below average in reading. You recognise the need to bring about further improvements in this area and this is reflected in your development plans.

The pupils receive clear advice on how they can improve their work and are also given extra work suited to their abilities and interests. They react well to this, as was seen in a geography lesson where one boy was enthusiastically conducting additional research to extend his knowledge of the Caribbean. You and your colleagues place considerable focus on encouraging pupils of all ages and abilities to extend their reasoning skills. Work in lessons and in books showed how pupils regularly collaborate on discussing and trying out various possible solutions to a problem. This was particularly well illustrated in a mathematics lesson, where pupils were looking for ways of presenting the information gathered from a survey they had conducted. They worked with great concentration and only called for the teacher's help when they were 'stuck'.

Since taking over as headteacher, you have re-organised the roles and responsibilities of the four departmental leaders, to focus on the school's priorities. These experienced members of staff work together very effectively to provide leadership and advice to colleagues. They have developed clear systems for planning and assessing pupils' learning across all subject areas. The curriculum is broad and balanced and includes an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of the world's major religions. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to visit places of worship other than Christian churches.

Safeguarding is effective.

All the parents who spoke to me said that their children are safe at the school. Almost all the staff and parents who responded to the online surveys were also very positive about children's safety. The school has rigorous systems for checking on

the suitability of adults to work with children. The site is secure and entry to the building is carefully controlled. Staff and governors receive regular training on safeguarding. The staff I spoke to knew how to identify possible signs of abuse and what to do if they have any concerns about a child's welfare.

All the pupils I spoke to said that they feel happy and safe at the school. They know how to keep themselves safe on roads and near railways. All pupils learn to swim, so that they are safe in and near water. Through regular practices, they learn what to do in the case of a fire. The pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using social media and what to do if they come across unsuitable material on the internet. They say that there is very little bullying at the school. When it does happen, it is dealt with promptly and effectively. If they are unhappy about anything, they can go to their teachers, their 'buddies' or use the 'worry box' to share their concerns. They are confident that they will receive appropriate help when necessary.

The school places considerable focus on promoting pupils' mental health. You and your staff work very effectively with external agencies to provide additional support for pupils and parents who need it.

Inspection findings

- For the last three years, results in the early years have been very good. The proportions of children achieving a good level of development and reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently above average. I wanted to know whether this positive picture is being maintained. Your analysis of the progress made by children currently in the early years shows that, compared with this time last year, more of them are already working at the expected standard. The children respond very positively to the rich range of stimulating activities provided for them. The standard of their writing is particularly impressive, with several children being able to produce an extended series of clear, comprehensible sentences, showing a good command of handwriting, spelling and punctuation. It is clear that early years provision is a strength of your school.
- You were able to show me that pupils in key stages 1 and 2 continue to perform well. You recognise the need to provide further challenge to the most able.
- Phonics results for Year 1 pupils were above average every year from 2014 to 2016. However, in 2017 they fell below average. We discussed the reasons for this and what you are doing to rectify the situation. Through detailed analysis, you have identified several factors that contributed to the underperformance last year. These include: slow pace of teaching; insufficient support for pupils needing additional help; and too few opportunities for pupils to apply their phonics skills in reading and writing activities. In response to these findings, you have made radical changes to provision and you now conduct monthly checks on pupils' progress. Your most-recent analysis shows that your figures are higher than they were at this time last year.

- In 2015 and 2016, the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and of pupils entitled to free school meals was in the lowest 10% nationally. I was interested to know what the school has done about this and what the most recent attendance figures are. You showed me that your revised attendance strategy has led to clear improvements. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is now close to average. That of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has also improved and is now average.
- Last term, you revised your behaviour policy. I wanted to know what had led you to do this. You explained that this was prompted, in part, by unusually challenging behaviour displayed by a very small number of pupils. You have now invested in additional support for those particular pupils. Observations in classrooms and an examination of your records show that the strategies you have adopted are bearing fruit. These pupils' behaviour is clearly improving. The pupils who met with me said that their lessons are rarely disrupted by other pupils' poor behaviour.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- at the end of key stages 1 and 2, the proportions of pupils gaining the higher standards in national tests are at least in line with averages across the country
- all improvement plans include precise targets and timescales, so that leaders can have an accurate view of how well the school is progressing towards its goals
- pupils have the opportunity to visit a wide range of places of worship, in order to extend their understanding of contemporary British culture.

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

Yours sincerely

Aelwyn Pugh
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held a meeting with you and your senior leadership team. I met five governors, including the chair and vice chair of the governing body, and spoke to a representative of the local authority. You and I visited lessons to observe teaching and look at books. I discussed safeguarding, behaviour and attendance with you and the assistant headteacher and discussed the organisation of the curriculum with your departmental leaders. I met a group of eight pupils, chosen at random from Years 3 to 6, and spoke to staff and pupils in lessons and around the school. I also listened to pupils reading. I spoke to 14 parents as they brought their children to

school. I examined the 90 responses to the online questionnaire 'Parent View' and the 16 responses to the staff survey. I examined a range of documentation, including your self-evaluation, school improvement plan and departmental plans.