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18 July 2018

Mr Hamish Clough  
Headteacher  
Stanah Primary School  
Lambs Road  
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Lancashire  
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Dear Mr Clough

### **Short inspection of Stanah Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 July 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 June 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The Stanah Primary School motto is 'work hard, be kind'. You and your deputy headteacher ensure that pupils and staff embrace this saying. Pupils explained to me how everyone at their school is 'warm and welcoming'. They value highly the help that they receive from their teachers. Pupils are keen to help each other. For example, they value the opportunity to be an 'online safety champion'. These pupils help to educate their peers about how to stay safe on the internet. Generally, parents support the school and believe that their children make good progress. Almost four fifths of those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel that they are well supported by you and your leadership team. Staff are excited about the ongoing developments that leaders continue to secure in the quality of teaching. Teachers are enthusiastic about the training that they receive. They feel confident to try out new approaches and further develop their teaching skills. Staff welcome the opportunity to share examples of good practice with each other. Following the last inspection, teaching assistants also benefit from appropriate training. This ensures that pupils benefit from greater levels of consistency in the use of whole-school policies. For example, as a result of effective training, teaching assistants use questioning techniques that pupils are familiar with.

Governors are committed to securing better outcomes for pupils. They know which aspects of the school require further development. For instance, they are aware

that in 2017 pupils' rates of progress in reading at key stage 2 were not good enough. Governors' accurate understanding of the school means that they ask pertinent questions of leaders. As a result, leaders' efforts have secured better outcomes for current pupils in reading at key stage 2. Nonetheless, governors do not hold leaders to account effectively enough for the progress made by groups of pupils. This is especially the case for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

Teaching provides a higher level of challenge for pupils than at the time of the previous inspection. As a result, your own assessment information shows that current pupils, particularly the most able pupils, make better rates of progress than they have done in the past. This is especially the case in reading at key stage 2. However, this is not yet consistent throughout the school. Although some teachers are highly skilled at using assessment information to plan learning, there are times when teachers do not use this information effectively. Because of this, on occasion, pupils complete activities that lack challenge. There is still some work to do to ensure that teachers consistently plan learning that challenges pupils to make good progress from their different starting points.

Leaders' plans to improve the school are appropriate because you have an accurate view of the school. You set measurable targets to ensure that you achieve your goals. For example, since the last inspection you have focused on further developing the teaching of phonics. As a result, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 who have achieved the expected standard in phonics increased this year. Those pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 receive appropriate support from staff to ensure that they catch up with their peers.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors ensure that the systems in place to safeguard pupils at the school are fit for purpose. Pupils report that they feel safe in school. They are confident that there is an adult in school that they can talk to if they have any worries. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. For instance, pupils in Year 3 learn about road safety and pupils in Year 5 benefit from 'bikeability' sessions. Pupils across the school show a strong awareness of how to stay safe on the internet. The pupils I spoke with during the inspection explained to me how they know not to share their personal information, such as their home address and the name of their school, online.

There are suitable procedures in place to ensure that adults at the school are safe to work with pupils. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. This ensures that they understand the steps to follow if they have concerns about a pupil. Pupils report that incidents of bullying are rare. They are confident that staff will deal with any incidents of bullying effectively. Pupils understand the negative effects of racist behaviour and they show respect and tolerance for different backgrounds and types of families. Pupils explained to me how they learn about different religions such as Hinduism and Christianity in religious education.

## Inspection findings

- I was interested to know about pupils' rates of progress in reading. This is because in 2017 pupils' rates of progress in reading at key stage 2 placed the school in the bottom 20% of schools nationally. You have changed your approach to teaching reading across the school. There is now a consistent method to teaching reading across all year groups. Teachers focus on identifying the gaps in pupils' knowledge. Because of this, staff ensure that pupils receive the help and support that they need to catch up with their reading.
- Staff have benefited from training in this area. You have also provided reading workshops for parents to help them to support their children with reading at home. Teachers check that pupils are reading often. You have invested in texts that better capture pupils' interests. This means that pupils are increasingly keen to read independently. Leaders' assessment information and work in pupils' books show that current pupils make better progress in their reading. As a result, a higher proportion of pupils at key stage 2 are working at the standard expected for their age.
- Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils excluded for a fixed period has been above the national average. Because of this, I wanted to check on the standard of pupils' behaviour at the school. The overwhelming majority of pupils are friendly and well-mannered. They move around the school at social times in a calm and orderly manner. During learning, pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils explained to me that their learning is seldom disrupted by the behaviour of their peers. Staff work effectively with the small proportion of pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour. They ensure that these pupils receive the help and support that they need to improve their behaviour. This means that the behaviour of a small minority of pupils is improving. As a result, the proportion of pupils excluded for a fixed period is now below the national average.
- I was also keen to learn about pupils' rates of absence, especially for disadvantaged pupils and for those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This is because, in the past, rates of absence for these groups have been above the national average for all pupils.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils and their families understand the importance of attending school every day. Pupils explained to me that they enjoy school and that they receive rewards for good attendance. Staff work with the families of those pupils who struggle to attend school. As a result, current rates of attendance are higher than the national average for all pupils. This is also the case for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who attend the school is lower than the national average. However, for the past two years there have been differences in the progress made by this group of pupils and other pupils nationally. Leaders use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is increasingly effective. This is because they pay closer attention to the barriers faced by this group of this pupils. The help and support that staff provide for this group of

pupils is bespoke and personalised. Because of this, it better meets the needs of individual pupils.

- Following improvements in the leadership of this area, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are improving. For example, a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils are working at the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. Furthermore, a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in phonics in Year 1.
- Although there have been a number of improvements in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, there is a lack of evaluation in this area. As a result, you are unclear which strategies have been the most effective. This is particularly the case at key stage 1. In addition, governors do not evaluate the effectiveness of leaders' actions on the progress made by disadvantaged pupils across the school thoroughly enough.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers use assessment information to plan learning that challenges pupils to make consistently good progress from their different starting points
- they evaluate the effectiveness of additional funding on the rates of progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities across the 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 Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Emma Gregory  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, a group of six teachers and formally with a group of 12 pupils. I spoke with a number of pupils across a range of year groups during social times. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.

I considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I took into account responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and written responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text facility.

I met with the school adviser from the local authority and I spoke with the school improvement partner. I met formally with three members of the governing body, including the vice-chair. I considered the school improvement plan and leaders' self-evaluation. I also checked on the contents of the school's website.

Leaders accompanied me on visits to classes where I observed teaching and learning across subjects and looked at pupils' work. I looked at pupils' reading comprehension work at key stage 2. I examined a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and minutes from governing body meetings.