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Mrs Stefanie Williams
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Williams

Short inspection of Havannah Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 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. You have created a dynamic and effective team of senior leaders who have helped to improve outcomes for pupils at the school. Governors are knowledgeable and are well informed about school improvement priorities. They provide a good balance of challenge and support to school leaders. Your accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses clearly informs your plans to develop the school further. You have created a culture of ambition to improve pupils' outcomes and you have ensured that staff are committed to the school's vision of 'inspiring potential and achieving success'. The staff who responded to the staff survey say that they are proud to be part of the school.

You have addressed the areas for improvement left at the last inspection effectively. There is now greater challenge for pupils in their mathematics work because they have more opportunities to use their reasoning skills when solving problems. In 2018, pupils' progress in mathematics improved to be well above the national average at the end of key stage 2. The other areas left at the last inspection were considered as part of the key lines of enquiry for this inspection.

Pupils value the excellent relationships that they have with staff. Havannah Primary is an inclusive and caring school where staff nurture pupils' individuality. Pupils enjoy coming to school because of the supportive culture that you have fostered. This has been central in ensuring that pupils are enthusiastic learners who focus well on their learning. Pupils appreciate the challenge and support provided by staff

to improve their work. The Year 6 pupils with whom I spoke are mature and good-humoured. They feel well prepared for the next stages in their education.

Most of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View, are positive about the school, typically commenting on the friendly and approachable staff that work at the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have created a climate of trust within the school. Pupils attribute the fact that they feel safe to the care of staff. They feel that they can approach staff with any worries that they may have and that these will be resolved. They know how to stay safe in a range of situations, including when online.

The pupils with whom I spoke said that bullying does not happen at the school. Leaders and governors have put in place an effective anti-bullying strategy which is managed by pupils themselves. This raises pupils' awareness of bullying and is effective in preventing it from happening.

Staff are vigilant. They have an excellent awareness of safeguarding matters because of the training and updates that they receive. Governors prioritise pupils' safety and have a good understanding of the local risks to pupils. They are active in promoting the message that 'it could happen here'. The designated leader ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that safeguarding remains a high priority so that children are kept safe from harm.

Inspection findings

- This inspection focused on several key lines of enquiry, the first of which was how effectively teachers challenge pupils in key stage 2 to improve their spelling, grammar and punctuation. This was an area for improvement at the last inspection. Since then, leaders have made a concerted effort to improve pupils' writing by developing their composition skills to organise their work well. Pupils' punctuation has improved, enabling them to write in more complex sentences when developing their points of view. Pupils use a wide range of interesting, descriptive vocabulary and their choice of language brings their work to life. Teachers plan work that links well to the topics that pupils learn, such as in Year 5, where pupils write about Ancient Egypt. The most able pupils make very strong progress and their work is neat and precise. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support because work is well matched to their needs. They make good progress to achieve standards that are appropriate for their age. However, common mistakes and basic errors persist in key stage 2 pupils' spelling.
- I also looked at how effectively leaders are improving children's reading and writing skills in the early years. Leaders' and governors' decision to take on board pre-school provision has been a wise one. Children in the provision for three-

year-olds have opportunities to explore their learning in well-thought-out areas so that they develop their language skills by working alongside other children. Staff monitor children's achievements daily in the nursery to ensure that adults target children's needs when they work with them. Children make good progress in their ability to use paint brushes and pencils to develop their pencil grip and their fine motor coordination. They show a growing awareness of sounds, which is developed further by the parents who use the optional homework tasks to support their children's learning. These activities show how staff and parents work well together for the benefit of children's learning. Emerging readers are confident in their own abilities. They read the sounds that they have learned and blend them together to form words.

- In Reception, children progress well in learning sounds and letters because of the precision of the teaching that they receive. The results of the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2018 were above the national average because of the effective support that pupils receive to consolidate their learning. Reception children use their skills to write simple words and sentences. However, the work of some of the most able children is limited by the structure of the tasks in their books which do not allow them to excel. Where pupils have the chance to recount a story, such as their work rewriting 'Little Red Riding Hood', their writing displays a much higher level of competence than their other work.
- Finally, I looked at how leaders have used the best practice within the school to provide staff with professional development to improve. Governors are committed to providing staff with opportunities to develop their skills. They see this as a way of valuing the work of staff. This has been the backbone of the improvements seen in the school over the last three years. For example, staff have been introduced to a new way of working in phonics. All staff have received training and peer support, as well as highly effective coaching from a senior leader who is the phonics champion. Staff receive support on a regular basis to improve their practice. This has resulted in consistently good practice among all staff. Staff also have opportunities to develop their skills to achieve recognised leadership qualifications from external providers. All staff are highly positive about the development that they have received. The level of development that staff receive has been instrumental in improving outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2, in the good level of attainment at the end of Year 2, and in the high proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- key stage 2 pupils have further opportunities to improve their spelling and to apply this knowledge in their writing
- some of the most able children in early years are challenged to achieve higher standards in their writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Bentham
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with leaders and governors to discuss safeguarding and aspects of the school's leadership and management. I reviewed documentation about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.

Together, we visited classes to observe teaching and learning in early years and in key stage 2. I spoke to pupils about their work informally during lessons. I also discussed a range of topics related to the school's provision with pupils, both formally and informally. I conducted a scrutiny of pupils' writing work in early years and in key stage 2. I heard children read individually from Nursery, Reception and Year 1, as well as hearing pupils read as part of their work in lessons, including phonics lessons.

I reviewed documentation, which included the monitoring of teaching and learning, minutes of governors' meetings, the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, and the school development plan. I took into account 45 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 20 responses to the staff survey.