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Mrs Ros Gill
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Gill

Short inspection of Northway Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Aply supported by your deputy headteacher and early years/key stage 1 leader, you have worked relentlessly to raise standards since the previous inspection. You have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses so that you respond quickly to any possible emerging issues. Parents and carers are delighted by the high-quality education that their children receive at Northway. Parents appreciate that you and your staff go the 'extra mile' every day to help their children reach their potential. Parents agree that the school offers a 'happy, safe, caring and supportive environment' where their children make 'great progress'.

Your youngest children get off to a good start. Parents are valued as partners in their children's education. Teachers make sure that parents are well informed about how their children are getting on, as well as what they can do to help their child at home. The early years leader and her team have made considerable improvements to the quality of provision for your youngest children. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1.

Pupils make good progress across the school. By the end of Year 6 the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics is well above the national average. Current pupils are making stronger progress across key stage 2, particularly in reading and mathematics. When we looked at work in pupils' books, visited lessons and looked at the school's assessment and tracking information, we saw how more of your most able pupils are working at the higher standards and

greater depth across the school now. Pupils make good progress in writing. However, more time is needed to embed the many changes the school has made to the teaching of writing. You hope that these changes will enable pupils to make more rapid progress in writing, similar to that in reading and mathematics.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers so that lessons proceed without interruption. Pupils told me how they get on well together, both at work and play. Older pupils take their responsibilities as team captains, prefects and monitors seriously. School councillors, digital leaders and the school's 'rights council' all ensure that pupils have a key role in the running of the school. Pupils look smart in their uniforms, take pride in their work and are kind and helpful. However, a small minority of pupils do not conform to the high standards leaders set for punctuality and attendance.

The quality of teaching across the school is consistently good. You invest heavily in staff training. You use a wealth of information to help you tailor support for each member of staff. Staff embrace the wealth of training opportunities. They find senior leaders approachable and supportive. Your focus on improving the quality of teaching across the school is paying dividends. For example, outcomes in mathematics across the school have improved markedly since the previous inspection. Teachers are secure in their mathematics subject knowledge so plan lessons which help pupils make rapid progress.

Governors take a keen interest in the school. They make good use of their diverse skills, expertise and experience to provide effective challenge and support to school leaders. Governors' use a wealth of information to make sure they have a deep understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors embrace training opportunities to make sure they keep up to date with their statutory responsibilities. Governors keep a close eye on how leaders use additional funding to improve outcomes for eligible pupils.

At the previous inspection, inspectors asked you to work with the local authority to admit pupils earlier to The Base, a resourced provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The local authority closed this provision last year. However, you have made sure that the expertise you and your staff developed, through running this provision, continues to benefit the pupils in your school.

Inspectors also asked the school to further improve the rate of progress of the most able pupils. Pupils appreciate the frequent opportunities to find out how well they are getting on, for example through pupil conferences. They enjoy the increased levels of challenge set by their teachers. Your most able pupils are relishing the improvements you have made to the teaching of mathematics and reading. These pupils now make more rapid progress, particularly at key stage 2. You recognised that although your disadvantaged most able pupils make similar rates of progress to their peers, they were not reaching the higher standards at the end of each key stage. You and your teaching staff frequently review how well these pupils are getting on. These reviews help you to identify ways to accelerate their rates of progress further. Moreover, you and your colleagues continue to work closely with local schools to share expertise and best practice. Consequently, more of your most able pupils now reach and exceed the

expected standards across the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders carry out comprehensive checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff and governors undertake frequent training so they understand their roles and responsibilities. Record-keeping is meticulous. Senior leaders and staff know children and their families extremely well. You make sure children and their families access any additional specialist support as needed. Governors, leaders and staff have prioritised children's safety online, both in school and out in the community, over the past two years. The school is working towards the online safety quality mark, to recognise the school's good practice in its internet safety policy and procedures. Pupils are adamant there is no bullying in the school. They are confident that any rare incidents would be dealt with effectively by staff. Parents and pupils agree that pupils are well cared for and safe.

Inspection findings

- You have embraced the opportunities afforded by the government's changes to the curriculum. Your staff have relished working together to develop a curriculum which meets the needs of your pupils. You have capitalised on the wealth of expertise across your staff to ensure that your pupils benefit from a broad and balanced range of subjects. Pupils talk enthusiastically and knowledgeably about the topics they have studied, including 'natural disasters' and 'rocks'. Your subject leaders use a wealth of information to make sure that skills are taught consistently well across the school. Staff work well together, sharing expertise willingly with each other, continually refining and improving the curriculum offer. Over three quarters of your pupils take part in one or more of the numerous lunchtime and after-school clubs you offer, including keep fit, film and forest clubs. Consequently, pupils acquire a wide range of knowledge and skills which stand them in good stead for high school.
- The vast majority of your pupils come to school on time every day. However, there is a small minority of families who struggle to get their children to school. You make sure you get to know your families well so that support is tailored to their specific needs. You make effective use of additional funding for pupils who have SEN and the pupil premium grant so eligible pupils are not disadvantaged by any absences. For example, teaching assistants help pupils catch up any missed learning. Pupils are motivated by the attendance reward system you have put in place. They are keen to earn team points, certificates and end of term rewards. As a result of your efforts, you have reversed the decline in attendance and reduced the numbers of pupils who are persistently absent. However, you are quite rightly concerned about the impact of term-time holidays on the learning of a small but significant number of your pupils.
- One of your school priorities is raising standards in writing across the school. More pupils reach the expected standard in writing at the end of early years now. Effective phonics teaching is giving pupils the confidence to 'have a go' at writing. You have invested in high-quality texts which engage and enthuse your pupils. Work in pupils'

books evidences how these approaches are helping pupils to make more interesting vocabulary choices, their meaning clearer and structure their writing better. You have taken decisive action to improve pupils' spelling as this has hampered pupils writing, historically. It is early days, so you are monitoring the impact of these initiatives on pupils' rates of progress across the school closely.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- further improve rates of attendance and reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent, so that no groups of pupils are disadvantaged by poor attendance
- embed the many changes the school has made to the teaching of writing so that pupils across the school make consistently strong progress from their different starting points.

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

Yours sincerely

Pippa Jackson Maitland
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- The inspector met with senior leaders, teaching and support staff, the chair and two members of the governing body. The inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector considered the 68 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as taking into account seven written responses from parents.
- The inspector met formally with a group of staff and considered the 31 responses to Ofsted's online survey of staff.
- The inspector considered the 58 responses to Ofsted's online survey of pupils, talked informally to pupils throughout the school day as well as meeting formally with a group of pupils.
- The inspector visited classrooms and checked on pupils' work, both in books and on wall displays.
- The inspector looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment, the school's self-evaluation and action plan as well as a range of other documentation.
- The inspector conducted a review of safeguarding, including an evaluation of the school's policies and procedures to keep pupils safe, training, recruitment checks and record-keeping.