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Mr M D Hallam
Headteacher
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Ashurst Road
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Dear Mr Hallam

Short inspection of Peel Hall Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 December 2015, 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 July 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

Peel Hall remains an inclusive school, which means that you, senior leaders and the governing body accept with open arms pupils who have been excluded from, or had negative experiences at, other schools. This includes those with behavioural difficulties and special educational needs, and those who have to live with significant social problems. The culture the leaders have established is one of high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attainment. Leaders go out of their way to make sure that pupils attend frequently and any barriers to their progress are systematically broken down.

In the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics. Teachers in each year group now use the same approach to teaching mathematics, the same mathematical language, and the same resources and equipment, including online resources. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in mathematics has improved. In 2015 almost all pupils made expected progress. This is a significant achievement given the proportion who were known to have special educational needs or to be arriving part-way through Key Stage 2. Leaders have taken the action needed to improve the consistency in teaching mathematics.

Senior leaders and governors are self-critical. They constantly question the success of their actions to improve the school. You have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. You know the pupils and their families very well and, as a result, are able to target the right support each pupil needs to succeed. Since the last inspection governance has improved. There are opportunities for teachers to lead subjects and to develop their leadership skills. High outcomes for the children in Nursery and Reception have been maintained.

Leaders have correctly identified that the next stage of their development is making sure that pupils use high-quality writing and mathematics in other subjects such as geography, history and science. Leaders have been less efficient in making sure that all the things that schools have to do by law are in place. I noticed during my visit that there were administrative mistakes in some policies and procedures, and the website did not meet government requirements. Despite these mistakes, all of the policies and procedures were in place and effective.

For a pupil the school is safe, staff are friendly and approachable and listen to their problems, and teaching enables them to make good progress from their starting points. They are helped to make sure that they understand what is being taught.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff are trained regularly and are up to date with school procedures and national requirements for protecting children. Safeguarding has a high priority and staff are vigilant and on high alert for anything that might indicate that pupils could be in danger. There are some good examples of school staff alerting you to concerns about a pupil's behaviour or home circumstances. This has then been followed up diligently to make sure that different agencies work together to make sure that the pupil is safe. Agencies including the police, health professionals, social workers and housing officers are brought together to improve children's lives. One of the agencies, according to the school, does not routinely pass on the necessary information in order that the school can be effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of appropriate quality. There is a good system in place for vetting staff, volunteers and governors to check for any reasons why they should be barred from working with children. There were some administrative errors in the recording of the single central record that were rectified by the end of the inspection. There were also some administrative errors in the content of the child protection policy.

The school's behaviour and bullying records indicate that there are rare instances of racism and homophobia. The school has a good system of following up any alleged bullying or behaviour incidents. If a pupil uses the terminology 'bullying', then it is treated as bullying rather than downgraded to a lesser incident.

Inspection findings

- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. They have taken action to maintain and improve provision for the youngest children, including changes to the outdoors. In 2015, children left Reception well above the level of development of other children of this age nationally. Leaders' changes to mathematics' teaching have raised standards. In 2012 for example, no pupils attained Level 3 by the end of Year 2. This has increased steadily and in 2015 almost a quarter of pupils attained this higher level. Similarly, by the end of Year 6 at the time of the previous inspection, a quarter of pupils attained the higher Level 5. In 2015, this rose to over a third of pupils.
- Most pupils at the end of Year 1 have the level of phonics (the sounds that letters make) they need to be able to sound out, read and spell letters in words. Leaders are very good at identifying what each individual pupil needs to catch up if they are off track to meet expectations for their age. They deploy staff skilfully and target teaching. As a result, the school has significant success in enabling pupils with special educational needs and those with social difficulties to catch up and make at least the progress expected of them.
- The nationally published assessment information indicates that in Year 6 pupils made poor progress in 2015. This is, however, misleading. Only a few pupils did not make the progress expected of them and this was because they arrived in school with only a short time before they left to go to secondary school. Governors have correctly identified the need to challenge more middle-ability pupils to attain the highest level possible in each year group.
- The governing body is knowledgeable, skilful and provides a good level of debate and challenge to school leaders. In particular, it makes sure that money is well spent and changes to the school have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Some areas of the school, however, are untidy and in relatively poor decorative order: the carpets, for example, paint work and a ceiling. Governors have a good overview of the quality of teaching and of the latest assessment information because they:
 - visit the school frequently and take part in trips, concerts and performances
 - get first-hand evidence from looking at pupils' work
 - visit lessons
 - conduct meetings with pupils to gather their views about their lessons.
- There is no formal system in place for governors to make sure that all of the school's statutory duties are met in full.
- The local authority commissions an annual external report from a school improvement partner; the report matches closely the judgements in an Ofsted inspection. You and the governors confirmed that the improvement partner provides significant challenge to leaders in terms of asking for evidence to prove that the school's view of itself is accurate and keeps the school 'on its toes'. The impact of the local authority's support is limited; it does not help, for example, that you have never met the local authority

representative who has been assigned to the school. The local authority has not realised the shortcomings in administration, for example in presenting the single central record and the information on the school's website.

- You have the confidence of most parents who spoke with me or who completed an online survey. Among the glowing comments were, 'This school is the best', and 'This is a fantastic school ... all staff and teachers are lovely and very approachable. When issues were raised they were dealt with within hours.' There were a few negative comments from parents relating to staff focusing too much on pupils with poor behaviour and not the rest of the class who are well behaved.
- I looked through some pupils' work and it became clear that the level of writing and mathematics in subjects such as history, geography and science is not as good as it is in their English and mathematics books. This is because, in some lessons, pupils are given worksheets which have very little space to write their answers in full or explain their ideas. In mathematics, there is not much evidence of pupils explaining their thinking or using their skills in science.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the governing body has a system to check that all statutory duties are met, including the information on the website
- pupils' history, geography and science work reflects their skills in English and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Manchester City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- I considered the views of 15 pupils who completed Ofsted's online survey.
- No members of staff completed the staff survey.
- To consider parents' views, I looked at the 12 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and I held a longer conversation with three parents during the day.
- With you I observed teaching in five classes. I also looked at the impact of teaching by looking through some pupils' work that they had completed this term.
- I met with three representatives of the governing body and I held a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner. A representative of the local authority attended the final feedback meeting but was unknown to the school.
- I looked at a range of documentation including the school's attendance information, policies, information on the website, assessment information for 2015, and information relating to safeguarding and protecting children.
- I met with you several times during the day to discuss, among other things, safeguarding and the school's improvement since the last inspection.
- I met with the teachers who lead teaching in mathematics and in modern foreign languages.