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Miss A Conboy  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Conboy

### **Short inspection of Claremont Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 22 May 2018 with Doreen Davenport, Ofsted Inspector, 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 December 2013.

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

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

Claremont Primary School is a happy and welcoming place to be. Leaders actively promote an ethos that celebrates the diversity of the wider community and fosters equality, tolerance and respect. The school's vision and values are a golden thread that permeates the school. There is a strong culture within the school where everyone enjoys learning from each other and sharing what is working well.

Since the last inspection you have been appointed to the role of headteacher. You have wasted no time in creating a new leadership structure which is enabling you to implement improvements across the school. Leaders at all levels are knowledgeable and having a positive impact in their areas of responsibility. Morale is high in the school and staff who responded to the online survey stated that they are proud to work at the school.

Governors are knowledgeable and know their school and community well. They undertake training to increase their knowledge and understanding and have recruited new governors who have specific skills. As a result, they regularly challenge and support you. Governors are highly supportive of the school and prioritise the views of pupils when they are considering improvements across the school.

The school effectively promotes pupils' physical health and fitness. Pupils have access to a wide range of different sports and activities, which they were keen to say is one of the best things about the school. Leaders actively involve as many pupils as possible. Pupils represent the school in a range of sporting competitions. Sports provision is a strength of the school.

Pupils are well mannered, friendly and confident. Their behaviour around school and in the playgrounds is of a high standard, and their attitudes to learning are good. Pupils listen well to teachers, support each other and settle quickly to their work. They appreciate the considerable leadership opportunities the school offers, such as being a librarian, sports leader or school councillor. Pupils enjoy school, are extremely happy and proud to be part of the school community. Consequently, attendance is above the national average.

Your work to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been largely successful. The previous inspection report identified the need to improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make rapid and sustained progress. This has been most successful in key stage 2, where pupils make rapid progress, especially in their writing and mathematics. Rates of progress, made by pupils through key stage 2 over the last three years, have been in the top 20% of schools nationally in writing and mathematics. Progress in reading had been consistently strong, but dipped in 2017. You swiftly identified that progress in reading needed to be accelerated, especially for the most able, and consequently made this the school's top priority for improvement. This became a key line of enquiry during the inspection.

Leaders have continued to secure improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers plan, observe and support each other admirably. They check on pupils' understanding as a matter of routine to help pupils to improve their work. Teachers also use assessment information effectively to plan relevant and interesting learning activities, which pupils were keen to tell inspectors they enjoy. As a result of the improvements made, pupils across the school are making good progress.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The record used to check the suitability of staff to work with children meets all requirements. Staff and governors receive a wide range of effective training. As a result, they all have a good understanding of their role in keeping pupils safe. They are clear about what to do if they have any concerns about pupils' safety or well-being. Records of leaders' work with external agencies are detailed.

All parents and staff share the confidence that pupils are safe in school. The pupils that spoke with inspectors said that they always feel safe at school. They were also keen to say how staff support them if they have concerns. The curriculum provides

many opportunities for pupils to learn about staying safe. Consequently, they know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when they are online.

## **Inspection findings**

- This inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry. The first of these looked at children's achievement in early years. This is because the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has been consistently below the national average. Children enter the school with skills below those typical for their age. Many of them have yet to learn English.
- When children start at the school, they settle quickly because of the nurturing and supportive relationships with adults. Teachers complete ongoing assessments, which highlight children's strengths and next steps in learning. As a result, they use this information to plan relevant learning activities which children enjoy. The indoor-learning areas are well resourced and provide exciting and skilfully planned opportunities for children to read, write and develop their mathematical understanding. Consequently, children are making good progress.
- Despite this, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development remains below the national figure. Leaders have identified that the outdoor-learning area does not offer the same high-quality learning experiences for children. This hinders the rate of progress that they make. There is a lack of opportunities to broaden and deepen children's learning, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. You acknowledge that this needs to remain an area for development, so that children make accelerated progress and a greater proportion achieve a good level of development.
- Another area we looked at was the progress pupils are making in their phonic skills in Year 1. Over the last three years, there have been fluctuations in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. This can partly be explained because of the variations between different cohorts of pupils. However, these are not the only factors. At the start of this academic year, the new reading and inclusion leaders reviewed the teaching of phonics and swiftly implemented a programme of support to improve the quality of phonics teaching. Leaders systematically track the progress that pupils make in their phonics and ensure that support is provided for any pupils who begin to fall behind. Pupils read with confidence and use their phonic skills to tackle unknown words. School assessment information shows that pupils are making good progress in their phonics.
- However, despite these improvements it was evident that there is some lack of consistency in staff's approach to the teaching of phonics. You agreed that there needs to be greater consistency in the quality of phonics teaching and learning, to ensure that more pupils achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- We also looked at pupils' achievement in reading across the school. This is because progress in reading in key stage 2 in 2017 declined, and reading attainment was also below average in key stage 1 and 2 for the last two years. Leaders identified this issue, and have taken swift and decisive action. A range of

different strategies have been implemented to improve pupils' outcomes. The new reading leadership team is knowledgeable and regularly reviews the teaching of reading and the progress that pupils make. Consequently, the team supports staff effectively to ensure that they have the necessary skills and understanding.

- There is now a consistent approach to the teaching of reading across the school. Leaders have adapted the teaching of guided reading so that it is focused sharply on developing pupils' vocabulary and their understanding. This was clear in the lessons that were observed, where staff were skilfully using questions to deepen pupils' understanding of texts. Although the teaching of reading has improved across the school, and pupils make good progress, you acknowledge that the new systems need embedding and adjusting, so that more pupils achieve at the higher standard.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in the early years, staff broaden and deepen children's learning outdoors, especially in reading, writing and mathematics, so that a greater proportion of children achieve a good level of development
- there is greater consistency in phonics teaching and learning so that more pupils achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check
- a greater proportion of pupils achieve at the higher standard in reading in key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Barlow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors observed teaching and learning and scrutinised examples of pupils' work. Inspectors met with you, senior leaders, middle leaders and the school office manager. Meetings were held with two governors, including the chair of the governing body, and with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors spoke with six pupils in key stage 2 and with pupils informally in lessons and around the school. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the start of the day.

Inspectors evaluated the 14 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and considered the 15 free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also took account of 33 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included: the school's self-evaluation; the school's development plans and assessment records; minutes of governing body meetings; safeguarding documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. Inspectors also considered information posted on the school's website.