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Mrs Joanne Hall
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hall

Short inspection of Greasby Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 26 January 2016, 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 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection, while appointing new staff and developing different approaches to teaching. For example, recent changes to the teaching of mathematics across the school are deepening pupils' ability to reason and to solve problems. Teachers feel invigorated by the focus upon deepening their own learning about mathematics.

You value your staff and encourage individuals to develop their leadership roles in the school. Your approach extends to the whole staff team: teaching assistants and the caretaker feel that their expertise and individual contributions are recognised. The last inspection highlighted the need for the school to share outstanding practice more effectively throughout the school. Leaders are now much better at sharing expertise and helping staff to learn from others. Your involvement with the local Teaching School and your links with other schools are playing a key role in helping to develop staff understanding of teaching and learning. You are not complacent and have identified that you wish to see more outstanding teaching across the whole school.

At the time of the last inspection, the inspector recommended that teachers refine their use of assessment and planning in order to provide the precise challenges that some individual pupils need. You have tackled this issue steadily and are dealing well with the challenges set by national changes to the assessment of pupils'

progress. Assessment in the school is now being used carefully to track pupils' progress and to identify carefully where pupils need extra support.

In March 2013, you and governors took over responsibility for the on-site pre-school. You did so because your vision of education for local children starts with three-year-olds. The pre-school is proving to be popular with parents. A separate inspection in October 2013 judged the quality and standards of the pre-school to be good. You are taking further steps to make the pre-school a full part of the school, including greater involvement in teaching by qualified teachers. However, this work is at an early stage of development and does not yet ensure that the very best provision is being made for the youngest children in the school.

There is much positive support for the work of the school from parents. However, some parents do not feel listened to, or fully informed about changes and improvements to the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Governors and the leadership team ensure that all arrangements to keep pupils safeguarded are fit for purpose. The school engages well with other agencies to coordinate the protection of pupils. The school premises are kept secure, and visitors checked thoroughly. All required checks of staff and volunteers are completed and held securely. Staff and governor knowledge of child protection is kept up to date through regular training. Staff understand the possible risks to pupils, as well as how to report concerns properly. They understand modern issues, such as the requirement to keep pupils safe from developing extremist views.

Inspection findings

- You have maintained the key strength of the school in that pupils continue to attain highly in mathematics, writing and reading by the time they leave for junior school. Good and better teaching across classes and the commitment of parents to extend pupils' learning at home are ensuring that pupils progress well. You have identified clear priorities for further improvement and are pursuing actions that are well-considered. For example, you are continuing to review and refine teaching with the aim of ensuring that every child progresses as well as others. You are actively encouraging pupils to improve their behaviour because not all pupils sit well in lessons.
- You are helping staff and governors to build upon the good work of the school and to challenge and review what is being achieved. You have prioritised mathematics as an area for development, not because it is weak, but because you want to see even higher standards. Staff share your commitment to broadening and deepening pupils' problem solving and reasoning skills. Already this work is leading to some innovative, highly skilled teaching in the school.

- Excellent documentation and assessment of pupils' learning using computer tablets is a new strength of the school. This is not only in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but also in Years 1 and 2. Staff are excited by the way in which they are being helped to gather a fuller picture of each child's development.
- The school is preparing children well for life in modern Britain. You actively involve children in raising money for charities such as the British Red Cross Refugee Crisis Appeal and the Marie Curie Daffodil Appeal. You make sure that children have regular opportunities to volunteer for roles such as fruit monitors and register monitors, and as play leaders while outdoors. You celebrate high attendance and good behaviour wherever possible.
- Governors are strongly committed to helping and supporting the school to improve. They bring a valuable range of skills and expertise to their roles. They are confident to ask questions and challenge what staff and leaders tell them. Members of the governing body value their formal meetings with staff in preparation for governor meetings. Governors have a good understanding of school data and the management of pay and staff performance.
- Pupils now enjoy a broader and more exciting curriculum in the school. They are learning to speak Mandarin Chinese, French and Spanish and authentic links are being made to wider learning about other people and places. All pupils in Year 2 learn to play the harp. Music is taught by a specialist teacher and pupils and staff are benefiting from the quality this brings to lessons and school events. Not least in the quality of the singing being expressed.
- Attractive and well-considered displays around the school show that pupils are given many opportunities to develop their understanding of the world. Staff are encouraging pupils to take an interest in nature through informative displays and planned activities about the national 'Big Garden Birdwatch'.
- Governors keep a careful watch on the organisational arrangements for the pre-school because they are keen to see this new venture become more and more integrated with the rest of the school. They have recently funded a teacher to cover the absence of the pre-school leader.
- Across the pre-school and the Reception classes, the most successful teaching is happening within adult-led activities. For example, Reception children were being taught skilfully how to think for themselves and solve problems with different groups of objects to match a given number. Pre-school children were supported well by a practitioner in their early mathematics when making the leaning tower of Pisa with large rubber blocks. This is part of their learning about different places and was stimulated by a well-placed photograph on the wall of their block play area.
- Some other aspects of provision in pre-school are less well developed. Not enough meaningful opportunities are given for children to practise their early mark making and writing skills. Some art activities do too little to develop children's ability to think or express their ideas.
- Leaders have been quick to develop new systems to assess and track individual children's progress in the early years at the school. The next step is for leaders to review and make sure that groups of children and the

overall cohort are attaining and progressing as much as possible by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Nonetheless, children make good progress from their starting points, and the proportion of children reaching expected levels by the end of Reception is above average.

- A large majority of parents are pleased with the school, commenting very positively about staff support for pupils. Several parents told me that staff go beyond what is required to help families and to support individual circumstances. They complimented the quality and range of the school curriculum and the benefits that this is having upon their children's progress. However, some parents are less happy with the school. They feel that their individual concerns have not been addressed well or that communication from the school is not always good. These issues are not evident in the annual anonymised school surveys of parents or in recent issues raised directly with the headteacher. Nevertheless, more should be done to ensure that parents' views are heard and that communication is of the highest quality.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- parents have a wide range of opportunities to share any individual views about the school with leaders and that communication with all parents about changes and improvements is clear, frequent and shared equally across classes
- the quality of teaching and learning in the pre-school is consistently strong, and that improvement across the Early Years Foundation Stage is shaped by a full analysis of the attainment and progress of different groups of children and the cohort as a whole by the end of Reception.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you to discuss your reviews of the school, your priorities and your vision for moving the school further forward. You and I observed teaching across classrooms, spoke to children and looked at children's work. We discussed improvements within the school since the previous inspection, as well as the recent development of a pre-school operated by the school governing body. I spoke to a sample of staff, including checking their understanding of children's care and protection. I met with the deputy headteacher to discuss the work of the pre-school and Reception classes. I checked records of staff suitability and asked you and a senior administrator about these records. I met with four members of the governing body, including the Chair. I reviewed the views of parents that were shared through the online Ofsted 'Parent View' website and by telephone. I spoke to several parents, carers and children on the school playground. I considered evidence from two school surveys of parents' views.