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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Carolyn Thackway
Headteacher
Charles Saer Community Primary School
Grange Road
Fleetwood
Lancashire
FY7 8DD

Dear Mrs Thackway

Short inspection of Charles Saer Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Under your leadership, this school is in a 'safe pair of hands'. Your calm, caring and measured approach reassures staff, pupils, parents and carers. You and the senior leadership team deploy your wealth of experience and expertise to good effect. You put the best interests of your pupils first, in every aspect of school life. You and your senior leadership team are held in high esteem by your colleagues at Charles Saer, in schools across Fleetwood and in the local authority.

Everyone is made to feel a valued member of the school community. Parents of your youngest pupils like helping their children to settle in. You encourage governors to make frequent visits to find out about the school's work first-hand. Staff applaud your willingness to listen to and act on their ideas. You make sure that pupils' successes are shared and celebrated with their families and friends.

Your provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is a strength of the school. Your staff are adept at managing the diverse range of pupils' needs well. For example, you offer a breakfast club and nurture group as well as small group teaching to help pupils overcome any barriers to learning. At Charles Saer there are no excuses. You and your staff work tirelessly to make sure every pupil gets the help and support they need to succeed.

You act with moral purpose. You make sure that you share your experience and

expertise with colleagues from other local schools, to benefit pupils across Fleetwood. Colleagues appreciate your willingness to offer advice and guidance around managing behaviour and SEN and disabilities. You give pupils who have struggled in other schools a new start at Charles Saer. For many of these pupils and their families this second chance helps them get 'back on track'. When pupils make a mistake, you use it as an opportunity to help them to learn how to get it right the next time. By the time your pupils move on to high school, they are well prepared to cope with any challenges they may face.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils look smart in their uniforms, listen attentively to their teachers and take pride in their work. You and the senior leadership team maintain a visible presence around the school throughout the day. You take time to talk to pupils, look at their work and listen to their news. You make sure you pick up on any emerging issues swiftly. You respond quickly to any concerns so that the school day proceeds without interruption. However, a small minority of pupils do not conform to the high standards leaders set for punctuality and attendance.

Most pupils are working below age-related expectations when they join the school. As they move through the school, pupils make good progress so that by the time they reach the end of key stage 2, the overwhelming majority of pupils are reaching at least the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Moreover, the proportions of pupils achieving greater depth in Year 6 is catching up to the national average. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the demands of the secondary school curriculum.

At the previous inspection, inspectors asked the school to improve the quality of teaching. This is a school where every member of the teaching staff is keen and eager to improve their professional skills and knowledge. Your staff use a range of approaches to evaluate the quality of their teaching, including video, work scrutiny and peer observation. Senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers have a wealth of information about the quality of teaching which you use effectively to plan training and support. Teaching staff are able to evidence the improvements this approach has made to their practice; for example, in the teaching of phonics. Middle leaders use this information well to identify and resolve any weaknesses in subject teaching. As a result, teaching is of a consistently high standard across the school. Teaching staff, at whatever stage of their career, are improving their practice continually.

Inspectors also asked leaders to improve further their impact on the school's performance. Governors take their responsibilities seriously. Governors have high expectations and aspirations for pupils. Governors seek reassurance that initiatives and teaching make a positive difference to pupils' outcomes. Governors attend training, pay close attention to information provided by school leaders, make frequent visits to school and meet routinely with key members of staff. Leaders have sharpened objectives in the school's improvement plan and broken these down into more easily measurable 'milestones'. Governors keep a close eye on the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Governors do not shy away from 'forthright and open' discussions with school leaders when required. As a result of their actions, governors understand and carry out their duties diligently and effectively.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders carry out thorough pre-employment checks to reassure themselves that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff receive comprehensive training so that they understand their roles and responsibilities. Staff report and record all concerns meticulously. Leaders follow up on any issues assiduously. The school works well with external partners to ensure that children and their families receive the help and support they need. Teachers make sure that pupils are taught well how to keep themselves safe both online and in the community. Pupils are adamant that any very rare incidents of bullying would be dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils agree that everyone is treated with respect regardless of race, family background or SEN and/or disability. Parents and pupils agree that pupils are well cared for and safe.

Inspection findings

- The vast majority of pupils are in school on time every day. However, prior to this year, rates of absence and persistent absence were above the national average and rising. Key staff have worked tirelessly to improve the attendance of a significant minority of pupils whose families struggle to get them to school. These staff get to know these families well so they can tailor support to each family's specific needs. You use additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, as well as pupil premium monies, to help overcome barriers to school attendance for your most vulnerable pupils. In addition, you recognise that a number of your pupils are missing out on learning due to term-time holidays. You have made sure that your community are in no doubt about the importance of good school attendance. As a result, the number of pupils persistently absent has decreased this year. Moreover, the attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils is now in line with their peers. However, you recognise that too many pupils continue to miss out on valuable learning time due to poor punctuality and days off school.
- Last year you took decisive action to improve pupils' progress in reading, following a decline in outcomes in 2016. Pupils are delighted with the extensive choice of books available now in the school library. The school's new reading programme, based on real books, has reignited many pupils' passion for reading. Pupils read a wide range of books across different genres, both fiction and non-fiction, contemporary and classic. However, although this initiative has been highly successful for the vast majority of pupils, your most able pupils are not matching the rapid progress of their classmates. Furthermore, this group's lack of progress in reading is hampering their writing. Your newly appointed literacy lead is starting to make improvements to the teaching of higher-order reading skills which you anticipate will benefit your most able pupils.
- Teachers pay close attention to pupils' interests and enthusiasms. 'In the moment' planning in early years, together with the new thematic curriculum across key stage 1 and 2, help teachers inspire and enthuse pupils. Charles Saer is a 'hive of activity'. Wall displays and albums capture the wealth of trips and visits. The vast majority of pupils take part in clubs and activities at lunchtime and after school. Your staff make the most of every opportunity for pupils to practise their writing across the curriculum. For example, your youngest children were keen to write down their ice cream orders, younger pupils explained clearly how to take care of a woolly mammoth and your

oldest pupils created a diary entry for Anne Frank. As a result, current pupils are producing writing of a higher standard than previous cohorts.

- Your youngest children get off to a good start. The improvements made by the early years lead and her team are paying dividends. The majority of your children join Nursery and Reception with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. High-quality provision ensures that children make strong progress across the early years. Despite this, many of your children do not reach the expected standards at the end of Reception. You make sure that the transition into Year 1 is seamless. Those children who have not achieved a good level of development benefit from more opportunities to get school-ready. For example, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in phonics at the end of Year 1 increased significantly in 2017.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- rates of attendance improve further, and the number of pupils who are persistently absent reduces, so that no groups of pupils are disadvantaged by poor attendance
- the teaching of reading continues to improve so that the most able pupils across the school make more rapid progress.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. 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 four members of the governing body. The inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority.

The inspector considered the 19 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as taking into account the responses to the school's own recent survey. The inspector talked to parents at the end of the school day.

The inspector met formally with a group of staff and considered the 22 responses to Ofsted's online survey of staff.

The inspector considered the 27 responses to Ofsted's online survey of pupils and 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.