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Mrs Heather Farrell
Headteacher
Oakfield Primary and Moderate Learning Difficulties Resource Provision
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Dear Mrs Farrell

Short inspection of Oakfield Primary and Moderate Learning Difficulties Resource Provision

Following my visit to the school on 12 February 2019, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in September 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and the deputy headteacher provide effective, focused leadership and have high ambitions for the school. You have secured the overwhelming support of the staff, and parents and carers, and together you are ensuring that the school continues to move forward effectively.

Pupils are polite and give visitors a warm welcome. Their behaviour in class and around school is consistently good, and they benefit from having access to extensive and well-resourced outdoor areas at breaktimes. Pupils are very positive about the school's system of rewards for good work and behaviour, and say that they like earning merit points or points for their teams. Pupils show care and consideration for others, and talked about how they had raised money for a charity that supports homeless people.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They work well together and take pride in their work. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely strong. Pupils appreciate the educational visits, such as visiting the Jodrell Bank Observatory, as part of their work about space. The curriculum is further enriched by a good programme of extra-curricular clubs, covering diverse areas such as football, craft and nature.

You have ensured that the areas for improvement identified when the predecessor school was last inspected have been addressed. You provide pupils with a rich and

engaging curriculum filled with interesting experiences. Through this, pupils learn about people and places around the world and throughout history, and their learning is displayed attractively in classrooms and around the school. You have also ensured that pupils are very clear about what they are expected to achieve. For example, pupils in the resource base are heavily involved in reviewing the targets in their individual education, health and care plans.

Your improvement planning is rigorous and reflects the accurate and honest view that you and your fellow leaders have of the school's many current strengths and those areas that need further development. The school's highly successful relationship with the Enquire Learning Trust has been a key factor in the school's ongoing improvement. Staff appreciate the opportunities they are given to learn from and share good practice with other local schools in the trust, and for further professional development. Governors say that being part of the trust has 'freed them up' to focus their attention on ensuring that educational outcomes continue to improve.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has successfully established a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Safeguarding training is delivered regularly to staff and governors, and staff know exactly what to do if they are worried about a pupil's welfare. Leaders work well in partnership with other agencies to ensure that any such concerns are dealt with promptly.

Leaders make sure that appropriate checks are made on staff, governors and regular visitors to the school to ensure that they are suitable people to work with children. Records of these checks, along with other arrangements relating to safeguarding, are detailed, of a good quality and fit for purpose. Pupils are quick to explain how leaders make sure that they are safe in school, such as by only allowing 'trusted visitors' into school.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry. The first of these considered how effectively reading is taught in key stage 2. In 2017 and 2018, pupils' attainment and progress in reading at the end of Year 6 have been below average and weaker than in writing and mathematics.
- You recognised that outcomes in reading were not as strong as you wanted them to be, and took decisive action to transform both the teaching and profile of reading across the school. 2017/18 was identified as Oakfield's 'year of reading', with reading being heavily promoted and pupils encouraged to read more in school and at home. You ensured that there were books freely available for pupils to take and read at home, and teachers introduced pupils to good-quality texts and established authors.
- You have put books at the heart of your curriculum, so that a lot of pupils' work in English, history, geography and science is linked to one or two central texts. Teachers focus strongly on developing pupils' reading comprehension, so they

can retrieve information and make deeper inferences about what the author is trying to say in a particular passage. This work is having a positive impact and the school's assessment data indicates that standards are rising. Many older pupils read with fluency, accuracy and understanding, and attitudes towards reading are positive. However, there is still further work to be done to ensure that these improvements are fully embedded and improved outcomes secured. Some pupils still struggle when faced with more complex vocabulary or when asked to go into greater detail when discussing texts.

- The second line of enquiry looked at how effectively phonics is taught. Over time, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics screening check has typically been lower than in most other schools.
- To a certain extent, some of the fluctuations in results have been caused by differences in the make-up of cohorts of pupils. Most pupils who have not reached the expected standard have been those pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Leadership of phonics is strong, and the phonics leader leads by example in her practice and subject knowledge. She is determined to ensure that all pupils achieve as highly as they can in phonics, no matter what their starting point. Staff have all received training to ensure that they have a consistent approach when teaching phonics, and pupils' progress in phonics is regularly checked to make sure that the work they are given is well matched to their needs. Additional support is given to those pupils who find learning phonics particularly challenging.
- This clear focus on providing good quality in phonics teaching is having a positive effect. The proportion of pupils currently working within the stage of phonics expected by the school is rising.
- The final line of enquiry focused on the quality of provision within the resource provision. This caters for pupils with a range of diagnosed moderate learning difficulties. All pupils who attend the provision are placed there by the local authority and have an education, health and care plan. At the time of the inspection, there were 11 pupils working in the resource provision.
- The resource provision is a real strength of the school. Parents of pupils in the provision are highly positive about it, and its quality is also recognised by the trust, which uses it as an exemplar of effective practice. It offers pupils a calm and nurturing environment. The atmosphere is very positive and relationships between staff and pupils are excellent.
- Pupils arrive with significantly low levels of attainment, and many have found it hard to access learning in their previous school. At Oakfield, they make strong progress from their starting points because they receive high-quality, personalised attention from skilled and experienced members of staff. A very good range of resources and activities is planned and provided for pupils, which builds on their learning needs and provides good opportunities to develop social skills, self-confidence and independence.
- Pupils in the resource provision are very well included in the broader life of the school. They start each day by registering with their own class and will also take

part in assemblies, breaktimes and lessons, such as those for physical education and music, with their classmates. This illustrates very well the importance that leaders place on Oakfield being a highly inclusive, welcoming school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to build on the good work being done to improve pupils' reading skills, so that pupils' progress and attainment in reading at the end of key stage 2 catch up with their outcomes in writing and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Tameside. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Neil Dixon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, I met with you and other school leaders, including the leader responsible for the resource provision and the phonics leader. I also met representatives of the Enquire Learning Trust and members of the school's local governing body. I met with a group of staff and considered nine responses to the staff survey. I took into account 10 responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, along with free-text comments and one letter from a parent. I talked with a group of pupils about life at school and heard another group of pupils read. You and the deputy headteacher joined me on visits to classes in early years, and key stage 1 and key stage 2, including the resource provision, and I looked at examples of pupils' work jointly with the deputy headteacher. I also studied a range of documentation covering different aspects of the school's work.