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Dr Stuart Harris
Headteacher
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Dear Dr Harris

Short inspection of Heckmondwike Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 November 2017, 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 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders and governors have a realistic view about the quality of education in the school and have an appropriate development plan to tackle areas that need to improve. You act swiftly, through regular reviews of the quality of teaching and learning alongside pupil outcomes, to ensure that pupils receive a good quality education. Governors provide effective challenge and support to school leaders, which helps you to evaluate the success of the actions you take.

Pupils are very friendly and welcoming to visitors. You have created a culture where pupils work together and support each other and relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils are friendly and polite. Pupils want to do well. Behaviour in lessons is good and where disruption does occur, it is swiftly resolved so that pupils can continue to learn. The majority of pupils attend well, although you recognise that the effect of term-time holidays affects progress for some pupils. You work increasingly well with parents and carers, and recognise that work to improve attendance needs to continue to build on the recent improvements for the first half term of this academic year.

Most children enter your school at stages of development that are well below age-related expectations. You and your staff work hard to ensure that pupils develop the skills and knowledge they need to be successful. Throughout the school, there is a clear focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. In the early years, teachers and leaders expertly weave opportunities for exploring number and writing

through all activities and this is enabling children to make more rapid progress. Pupils in key stage 1 are making more progress because you have thought carefully about how to structure their day. Your strategies are supporting pupils in all areas of the curriculum as well as developing skills of working together and independence. The effect of this is clear from pupils' progress information and work. Currently, pupils are making more progress than previous cohorts did. In key stage 2, pupils make good progress. Teaching is good, and this makes up for some historic weaker teaching for these pupils. Work in books shows that pupils are keen to learn and work is appropriate to meet their needs. However, in some books, particularly for the most able, work does not always provide enough challenge to ensure that they have the opportunity to reach the highest levels of attainment.

In response to the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection in May 2013, you implemented a new data management system, which is providing greater information to teachers and senior leaders about the progress pupils are making. This is leading to better planning of learning so that it increasingly meets the needs of pupils. Through regular analysis of this information, teachers identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and ensure that their teaching allows pupils to catch up. For example, during the inspection in the early years, a teaching assistant skilfully supported children's language development through excellent questioning. This support was during a planned intervention for identified children who needed it.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff receive appropriate training to keep pupils safe. Staff and governors have completed child protection training and 'Prevent' duty training. The training staff access ensures that they have a good awareness of warning signs that may indicate that pupils need help. Appropriate risk assessments are in place to keep pupils safe in school and on school trips. However, we agree that staff need to record the checks that they make in the early years, on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

Pupils say that they feel safe and have someone to go to if they have a problem. Bullying happens rarely and if it does, pupils are confident that it will be resolved quickly. Pupils receive risk education in an age appropriate way and know, for example, how to safely cross a road.

Inspection findings

- Overall, pupils' attendance declined slightly in the previous academic year, in part due to extended holidays that were unauthorised. Leaders' actions to improve this, including the skilled community worker working closely with parents and implementing clear attendance policies, is leading to improvements. Attendance for the first half term in this academic year is showing clear improvement compared to the same time in the previous academic year.

- Leaders regularly evaluate the effect of the spending of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. For example, by employing a speech and language therapist, leaders ensure that pupils receive appropriate support to develop their confidence in speaking. Leaders' employment of additional teaching assistants ensures that pupils receive further support in reading, writing and mathematics in all key stages.
- Leaders regularly evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in the school. Where they identify areas to improve, leaders implement appropriate professional development and monitor the success of new strategies. For example, leaders recognised that pupils' progress in grammar, punctuation and spelling attainment was not good enough in 2016. Following the professional development opportunity, attainment in this area increased to above the national average in 2017.
- Early years leaders ensure that baseline assessments for children who enter the early years are accurate. They use exemplar materials and carry out careful moderation of the stages of development that the children are assessed to be working at. Following a thorough analysis of the children's abilities, teaching is personalised to the needs of the children, which is ensuring that they make better progress than they did previously. Clear action is taken to ensure that the learning environment is boy friendly in response to girls outperforming boys in previous years. Boys in the school are more active in their learning and more willing to write due to effective restructuring of some activities and the inclusion of a superheroes theme.
- Early years leaders carry out checks of risk assessments regularly to ensure that equipment is safe for children to use. However, they do not record all checks thoroughly.
- The implementation of a new data management system is providing better quality information for teachers and leaders. Through this, teachers' lesson planning is becoming more precise and therefore better at meeting the needs of learners, although work remains to ensure that the most able pupils receive appropriate challenge. Leaders are now regularly holding teachers to account for the progress that their pupils make.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching and learning continues to improve so that all pupils, but particularly the most able, are challenged in their learning to achieve the highest possible outcomes
- work with parents continues to ensure that attendance continues to rise and persistent absence declines
- an effective system for recording regular risk assessment checks in the early years is implemented.

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

published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Redshaw
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher. I also met with middle leaders and members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I visited classrooms and observed teaching and learning jointly with you. I spoke to pupils during their lessons and at breaktime. I reviewed pupils' work in a range of subjects in a sample of their workbooks; this was alongside your senior leaders. I reviewed information detailing pupils' progress and attainment, the school self-evaluation document, the school development plan and your arrangements for checking on the performance of teachers. Documents relating to your work to safeguard pupils, including records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents were also checked. I reviewed the information and policies on the school's website. I considered the 20 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and 32 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. No pupils responded to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.