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Mrs Clare Scott
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Scott

Short inspection of Cramlington Northburn Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 June 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in September 2016, you have worked relentlessly to heighten aspirations for pupils across the school community. You hold children firmly at the centre of your ambitions and have a strong focus on raising pupils' attainment through an exciting, inspiring curriculum. Your clear, convincing vision for improvement has been communicated well. As a result, governors and staff are invigorated; they are fully committed to realising your goals.

The areas identified at the previous inspection have been tackled successfully. You have restructured the leadership team, improving capacity while clarifying roles and responsibilities. Together with your deputy headteacher and phase leaders, you monitor teaching and learning closely. Staff value your no-nonsense approach; you say precisely what you mean. Staff are given detailed feedback about the quality of their work and performance management systems are linked directly to school improvement plans. Support goes hand-in-hand with challenge for staff. Partnership working with other schools and good-quality training opportunities enhance performance and are appreciated by all adults. Consequently, most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their different starting points.

Leaders and staff have a clear understanding of the school's strengths. Examples of good practice are shared and built upon. Attainment in the early years and in key stage 1 is rising each year across subjects. Pupils' phonics outcomes have exceeded

national comparatives, over time, meaning pupils are equipped with early reading and writing skills effectively. Historically, pupils' achievement in key stage 2 has been significantly above national averages across subjects. Pupils' attainment in writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling remained particularly strong in 2016 at both expected and greater depth standards. In 2016, in key stage 1 and 2, pupils' attainment in science was well above the national averages. Rates of pupils' progress in key stage 2 were well above other pupils' progress nationally in writing, above in mathematics and similar in reading. The proportions of pupils achieving expected standards and greater depths of learning in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1 were also well above the national averages. A positive picture in terms of pupils' outcomes.

You are not, however, resting on laurels or a victim of complacency. You have accurately targeted the correct areas for improvement through careful analyses of the school's provision and its historical and current performance.

In key stage 2, you noted some imbalance in terms of pupils' achievements in 2016. The proportions of pupils reaching expected standards in all subjects were similar to that of other pupils nationally. The proportions of pupils reaching a greater depth of learning in reading and mathematics, however, were disappointing. A small minority of parents and carers expressed some concerns about their children's progress in key stage 2. You and the governors have not wallowed in this disappointment. Instead, issues have been tackled head on. Together with staff, you have raised the profile of reading. You have also increased the range and quality of opportunities for pupils to reason mathematically and solve increasingly complex problems across the curriculum. This year, work in lessons, pupils' books and your assessment information show higher proportions of pupils achieving greater depths of learning across subjects and year groups. Evidently, your tactics are working. You agree, however, that further work is needed to build on this emerging success to ensure that all pupils have sufficient and consistent challenge in reading and mathematics in key stage 2.

You track the attendance and progress of all groups of pupils carefully. Overall rates of attendance have exceeded national averages over time and continue to do so. You and your leadership team take prompt action where particular issues arise. You have successfully improved the attendance of a small group of disadvantaged pupils. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent from school has reduced.

Children enter the school with abilities and skills which are broadly typical of those expected for their age. Teachers in the early years plan teaching and learning tasks which excite children's interests and allow most children to make good or better progress. Collaborative play is well developed and behaviour is good. Children are happy, well cared for and have positive relationships with adults. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is well above the national average, having risen year-on-year. Parents are appreciative, saying, 'the early years team truly go above and beyond'. You have accurately identified, however, that there is

scope to provide further challenge in some areas of the early years curriculum particularly for the most able children in reading and writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school; their good attendance and punctuality attest to this. There are smiles aplenty at breaktimes; play is good-natured and inclusive. Pupils' conduct in and around the school is mannerly; doors are held open and older pupils are attentive to younger pupils' needs. Pupils are proud of each other, saying, 'we look after each other', and 'children at this school are trustworthy, helpful and nice'. School, they say, makes them feel safe. Pupils talk about the benefits and risks of information technology and social media knowledgeably. Parents agree that their children are well looked after, happy and protected: 'the school is a warm and safe environment'. Any accidents or upsets are dealt with promptly and sensitively by caring staff.

You firmly believe that keeping pupils free from harm and supporting them to feel safe is crucial, central to everything that you and your staff do. You have therefore embedded efficient systems and record keeping is of a high quality. All visitors receive a safeguarding leaflet containing key information. Pupils know that any visitors must wear identification badges. The site is secure and well maintained. Regular, routine checks on playground and physical education equipment take place. Any required repairs are carried out promptly, thereby preventing potential injury to pupils.

There are stringent checks in place to ensure that all adults working with pupils are suitable. You and other leaders are trained in safer recruitment techniques. Child protection training takes place regularly and all staff meetings have safeguarding as a standing agenda item. This means staff have the most up-to-date knowledge and information needed to protect children. Positive links with external agencies mean the most vulnerable pupils are supported effectively. Risks are minimised to ensure that pupils are protected from harm.

Inspection findings

- You currently take responsibility for leading special educational needs across the school, having accrued a wealth of experience in this area. Recently, another teacher has also completed the special educational needs coordinator training. This is enhancing the school's capacity to manage the needs of pupils effectively. Early identification, high expectations and prompt support or challenge are well embedded. Interventions are tailored to meet individual needs expertly. Parents and pupils contribute to the detailed personal profiles which map out tailored programmes of work. External specialists are consulted to secure provision that best suits each child. It is a key strength of the school's work that pupils in this group are making good progress from their different starting points.
- Most disadvantaged pupils in the school are making good progress from their different starting points across subjects. You track achievement in each year group carefully and use the pupil premium wisely to enhance provision where

need is identified. In 2016, you noticed that weaknesses in attendance were contributing to weaker rates of progress for some disadvantaged pupils. You and your leaders took action, supporting and challenging pupils and their families to better understand the importance of good attendance. The rate of attendance is now at 96.1%, a figure that matches the attendance of other pupils nationally in 2016. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent from school has also reduced considerably from 17.4% last year to 7.7%, a clear improvement. You are rightly determined to maintain your efforts to ensure that no pupil is hindered by poor attendance.

- Teachers and pupils have good relationships. Positive classroom climates are enhanced by the mutually respectful manner with which pupils and adults interact. Pupils said the mantra, 'treat others as you would like to be treated', is often used by teachers. During the science, technology, engineering and mathematics work taking place across the school during the inspection, pupils were enthused and engaged. Good learning behaviours and positive attitudes to learning were in abundance. The context for learning was inspiring and pupils were enormously excited to be working with real engineers and experts in bridge-building. In some work and lessons, though, opportunities to really challenge pupils to think deeply and make connections across subjects are missed. Wider inspection evidence found some children in the early years had insufficient challenge in terms of reading and writing, indoors and outside. Also identified was a lack of depth or challenge for some pupils within reading and mathematics, in key stage 2 particularly.
- Governors are committed to self-improvement. They take part in training opportunities offered by the local authority and meet regularly to discuss the school's performance. Governors also make frequent visits to the school to find out for themselves what pupils are experiencing. You and each phase leader present detailed reports to governors, ensuring that governors have the information they need to understand the effectiveness of leaders' actions and work. Governing body minutes show that challenging questions are asked of leaders. Governors are keen to step up to the plate to support your aspirational vision for the school and have conducted a skills audit to ensure that they have the correct balance of expertise to fully support your school moving forward.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils in key stage 2 read, discuss and debate demanding texts and information more regularly, to develop heightened skills of inference and deduction
- pupils in key stage 2 have consistent opportunities to reason and think deeply about mathematics, solving increasingly complex problems across the curriculum
- the most able children in the early years have sufficient challenge in reading and writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona Manuel

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders, middle leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority. Together, you and I observed teaching and learning in all classes across the school. I took account of parental responses: 65 free-text responses and 70 to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. There were no responses to the pupil survey. I met with a group of pupils and talked with pupils informally in lessons. I considered the 18 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. I examined pupils' work and evaluated information about the progress of pupils. I considered a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and records regarding behaviour and safety.