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17 July 2019

Mrs Alison Cairns  
Headteacher  
North Fawdon Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Cairns

### **Short inspection of North Fawdon Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 5 July 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 December 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. North Fawdon Primary School is a highly inclusive, welcoming school which is at the heart of the local community and where pupils feel safe, valued and happy. Pupils are proud of how hard they work and of the positive attitudes they are encouraged to develop. The school motto 'learn and explore together, aim high and succeed' summarises the ethos which permeates the school.

You have developed a strong and talented team of senior and middle leaders who share your vision of high expectations for all pupils. Together, you provide a positive and aspirational culture within the school and, as a result, all staff agreed that they feel well supported and that they are treated fairly and with respect. Since joining the Smart Multi-Academy trust in November 2016, you have welcomed the strong partnership working that being part of a trust allows.

You are proud of the effectiveness of the school's special resource base, known as the ARC. Pupils from other local schools attend the unit and they all have education, health and care plans. You have ensured that staff are trained effectively in order to provide effective nurture, support and education for the pupils with complex social, emotional and behavioural needs. Pupils who currently attend this provision are making good progress from their starting points.

The vast majority of parents and carers who shared their views are loyal to the school. They appreciate the effective support that staff offer to parents, the strong

communication and the good progress that their children make. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs or who are disadvantaged appreciate the support that their children receive and the strong progress they make.

You have focused your work on the areas for development identified at the last inspection of the predecessor school. You have improved the quality of teaching and it is now consistently good across the school. Pupils' books show that teachers provide challenging work for pupils in key stages 1 and 2, in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 2, the proportion of pupils currently working within the greater depths of learning, in reading and mathematics, has increased compared to previous years. However, too few pupils attain greater depth in writing. Pupils in Year 2 have improved their reading skills because leaders have ensured that all teachers use a systematic approach to teaching reading. This includes increased opportunities for pupils to take books home to practise their reading. At the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils attaining and exceeding the expected standards improved significantly in 2018, compared to previous years.

The local governing body is responsible for the strategic development of the school. Governors are highly skilled. Their wide range of skills, together with knowledge gained through relevant training, enables them to provide appropriate challenge and support to school leaders.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have effective systems in place to check that staff, volunteers and visitors are suitable to work with children. Staff and governors have attended a wide range of training related to safeguarding. As a result, everyone is clear on what to do if they have any concerns relating to keeping children safe. You have ensured that staff new to the school receive relevant training and information relating to safeguarding as part of the induction process.

Pupils have a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying because adults plan activities that help pupils to understand this well. Pupils who shared their views during the inspection felt that bullying rarely happened, but, when it did, teachers were really good at resolving it. Leaders keep detailed records of how incidents are dealt with, which include gathering pupils' feelings and views about behaviour. As a result, all pupils who gave their views say that they feel safe in school.

### **Inspection findings**

- Children are happy, secure and confident in the early years. You arrange external validation of leaders' assessments of children when they enter the early years unit. This ensures that accurate views are held of what children know and can do. You recognise the importance of providing high-quality experiences, and the children in both Nursery and Reception access learning opportunities within the classroom which are closely matched to their needs. The outdoor learning environment provides a range of areas and planned activities. Children in both

Nursery and Reception access the same outdoor resources. As a result, although learning is highly challenging for children inside the classroom, learning outdoors is not as challenging for children in Reception as it is for children in Nursery.

- The proportion of pupils who join, or leave, the school at different points during the school year, is higher than average. Pupils who join the school make strong progress from their starting points on entry to the school. However, some pupils who have made good or exceptional progress leave the school before they take the end of key stage assessments. This impacts on the proportion of pupils who reach the national averages in the outcomes published at the end of each key stage.
- The teaching of phonics across early years and key stage 1 is effective. Children in early years make a good start to learning their letters and sounds because of the systematic approach to daily phonics sessions. The teacher in early years is highly skilled and children are extremely motivated to read and write. Pupils in key stage 1 articulate sounds correctly and apply their phonics knowledge accurately to their reading and writing. Pupils' reading books are well matched to their reading ability. This means that pupils can read the words in their books, which gives them confidence and fluency when they are reading aloud.
- The English leader has introduced a number of changes to writing, as a result of training and listening to the views of the pupils. Teachers have implemented different ways to develop writing at length and across different subjects. Work in pupils' books indicates that pupils across the school have improved their skills in handwriting, presentation and applying the rules of English grammar. In key stage 1, teachers have focused on developing ambitious vocabulary and complex sentence structure. Although pupils are making strong progress in their writing, there are too few pupils who are working within the greater depth of learning in writing, compared to reading and mathematics.
- Improving pupils' attendance is a high priority for the school. The proportion of pupils who are absent, including those who are persistently absent, from school is too high when compared to the national average. You and your staff provide extensive support to pupils who are regularly absent from school, and their families. Following concerted efforts from you and your leaders, the proportion of pupils taking holidays during term time has reduced. The proportion of pupils recorded as absent this academic year are similar to previous years. You recognise that working with families to improve pupils' attendance remains a priority.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- embed the changes made to the teaching of writing so that a greater proportion of pupils attain at greater depth by the end of key stage 1
- provide greater challenge for Reception children in their outdoor learning environment

- continue to work with parents to improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absence for all pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Aitchison  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders. I also met with five members of the local governing body, one of the trustees and the acting chief executive from the Smart Multi-Academy Trust. I observed teaching and learning with you. I spoke to pupils in lessons and at breaktimes and I met formally with a group of pupils to gather their views. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. I scrutinised a selection of the pupils' workbooks. I considered a range of the school's documentation, including its self-evaluation document, development plan, information relating to pupils' attainment, progress and attendance and documents related to safeguarding. I considered the 6 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, 30 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 20 responses to the online pupils' survey.