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Mrs Suzanne Connolly
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Connolly

Short inspection of Felton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are driving forward continuous improvements which are impacting positively on improving the quality of teaching and accelerating the progress pupils make in their learning. Robust and accurate self-evaluation involves everyone in the school. Your supportive style and meticulous attention to detail empowers leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. It promotes teamwork and places a strong emphasis on an inclusive approach which allows access to high-quality learning opportunities for all pupils. School improvement is driven through a vision shared by the whole-school community including the skilled and supportive governing body. 'Loving, learning, living' runs like a golden thread through all school activities.

You have successfully introduced a style of leadership that allows teachers to be the drivers of a range of actions that meet the differing and specific needs of different cohorts of pupils in school. Rigorous interrogation of assessment information and a clear understanding of the needs of each individual pupil create learning opportunities which allow pupils to excel. In addition, 'mini-adventures', enhanced by innovative use of the large outdoor space and woodland area, develop teamwork and resilience in pupils. These essential attitudes impact positively on pupils' learning, removing any fear of failure and allowing pupils to stick at a task.

You have ensured that areas for development identified in the previous inspection before your full-time appointment have been tackled successfully. Learning is

planned to be exciting and capture pupils' imagination. Pupils' achievement in mathematics matches that in reading and writing, and has been a focus of school improvement. You acknowledge that further work needs to be completed in order to consolidate pupils' mathematical reasoning, including in how it is recorded.

You have ensured that pupils benefit from a curriculum that captures their interest. The mini-adventures, linked to a class text, are designed to develop pupils' English and mathematical skills as well as in all subjects across the curriculum. Older pupils have benefited from a residential opportunity at Blencathra in the Lake District, and pupils reported exciting visits to the local river, Alnwick Museum and a Roman fort in North Shields. You have worked hard to introduce bespoke systems to assess and track pupils' progress in subject-specific skills across the whole curriculum which allow teachers to ensure progression in pupils' knowledge and skills. You acknowledge that these new systems require further refinement and to become embedded.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Under the watchful eye of all staff, no stone is left unturned to ensure that all pupils are safe. The curriculum supports pupils well in maintaining their own safety. Pupils know the dangers of social media and understand they should never post personal details online. Pupils have full trust in their teachers and teaching assistants who look after them. Pupils report feeling safe all of the time.

Policies and procedures are of extremely high quality and regularly updated by the office manager. You maintain meticulous records of all incidents and conversations regarding pupils' welfare, as well as 'cause for concern' forms completed by staff. Staff and governor training is thorough and up to date, including training to ensure that pupils are kept safe from online dangers and that recruitment procedures are watertight. Registers of staff training are completed diligently.

Inspection findings

- Children get off to a really good start in the early years. Strong leadership, exciting resources and activities, supportive relationships and skilled staff ensure that children in the Nursery and Reception have every opportunity to thrive. Children are happy, cooperative and interested in their learning. Adult support is appropriate and well targeted. The proportion who reach a good level of development is well above that found nationally. As a result, children are well prepared to move to the next phase of their education.
- You have ensured that regular and accurate assessment is used to identify those pupils on track to reach levels expected for their age, those who are at risk of falling behind and those who are making rapid progress. This information is then used to plan specific and targeted support to allow pupils to catch up quickly, or to set further tasks to challenge and stretch pupils' understanding which allow them to work at a deeper level in their learning. Your devolved leadership style

that requires teachers to take responsibility for planning specific actions to accelerate their pupils' learning is highly effective.

- You have ensured that safeguarding is of an extremely high quality and that the school's work to foster pupils' personal development and welfare continues to be excellent. The school works tirelessly to ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for. The strong relationships in school, and high levels of trust between adults and pupils, ensure that pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is exemplary. This supports their learning extremely well. Pupils are polite, caring, considerate and friendly to each other and to adults.
- You have revitalised and reinvigorated leadership systems across the school. There is a strong sense of a shared purpose which underpins all school activities – an ambition to provide the very best for pupils in a school that exudes a strong Christian ethos. You have ensured that leadership is the responsibility of the whole-school community, which includes governors, teachers and teaching assistants. Strategic planning for each class falls to class teachers who are increasingly skilled at using all available assessment information to plan appropriate support to meet the learning needs of their pupils. As a result, a large majority of pupils are on track to meet standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You are supported well by a skilled governing body, possessing a range of transferable professional skills and sharing your ambition to see pupils blossom and thrive. Following an external review, 'governor champions' were established to lead discussion and challenge on their area of responsibility. A timetable of monitoring activities is meticulously followed, with clear guidelines for providing detailed feedback to the full governing body. You provide governors with a highly informative termly self-evaluation report. This is interrogated carefully, the chair of the governing body producing a list of questions to challenge and to receive further clarification. Governors are fully involved in monitoring activities alongside school leaders.
- You have ensured that the school's curriculum is bespoke, diverse and tailored to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers' skilful use of different forms of assessment allows them to plan short units of work, 'mini-adventures'. A class text is also used as part of the unit, such as in the Year 4, 5 and 6 class where pupils were enjoying reading 'Holes' by Louis Sachar as part of the mini-adventure on 'Crime through time'. Creative use is made of your expansive school grounds, which include a forested area, through work led and planned by one of your skilled teaching assistants. Pupils have access to all subjects across the curriculum. Progress in knowledge and skills is now assessed and tracked across the wider curriculum through the new systems devised and introduced this year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- new systems to assess and track the progress of pupils in subjects across the wider curriculum are refined and embedded
- pupils' skills in mathematical reasoning are further consolidated.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Scott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the chair of the governing body and the office manager. Alongside you, I visited lessons in each class when I also reviewed a sample of pupils' workbooks. I spoke to pupils about their work and their views of the school, and listened to some pupils read. I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime. A range of documents was considered relating to safeguarding. I examined your most recent school self-evaluation report for governors, teachers' detailed action-planning files, and the school's assessment and tracking of current pupils' progress and attainment. I also scrutinised pupils' achievement in the 2016 and 2017 statutory assessments, the 37 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's website.