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29 March 2017

Mrs Morag Sinclair
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Dear Mrs Sinclair

Short inspection of Newbald Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 March 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 December 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 have promoted a warm and welcoming atmosphere and pupils gain much from the exciting and enriching curriculum. Despite issues in terms of staff movement, effective teaching has been sustained and there is now capacity for further improvement. This is because you have set clear expectations and placed an emphasis on developing management and staff expertise. Middle leaders are more confident and better placed to raise standards, and extended training opportunities have also benefited teaching assistants. Leaders have an accurate view of required developments, while a well-informed governing body keeps a watchful eye on school progress against agreed actions. The large majority of parents have confidence in the school and feel that it serves their village community well.

Attendance rates are above national levels for all groups because pupils love coming to school and enjoy learning. They say that learning is fun and they trust the adults, especially you, to look after them well. They mix positively and conduct themselves responsibly, playing a positive role in school life. The wide range of extra-curricular opportunities is impressive in a small school. Pupils' horizons are extended by a variety of stimulating first-hand learning experiences, such as the ambitious recent visit to London.

At the previous inspection, the need to challenge most-able pupils in mathematics was identified. Although outcomes in the subject at the end of key stage 2 in 2016

were disappointing, standards over the preceding three years had been consistently above those seen nationally, especially for the most able pupils. Leaders have quickly analysed the underlying reasons behind the weaker progress and addressed these issues through training, new approaches to setting learning activities and a drive on basic number skills. Work in books and the teaching that we both observed confirm that current pupils are now doing much better.

The previous inspection also highlighted the need for a more flexible approach in learning at key stage 1 to meet the wide-ranging needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. Learning we observed and work in pupils' books in key stage 1 were pitched at the right level. However, a more rigorous approach to the teaching of handwriting and spelling is still needed in key stage 1, as well as in the early years.

In addition to the issues raised in the previous inspection, I was keen to make sure that disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. The number of such pupils is very low but I noted that they receive nurturing guidance from adults and that their learning is closely checked. The newly appointed special educational needs coordinator frequently monitors their achievement and targets additional learning activities that help them make secure progress.

I also looked at the management and teaching of reading. I was heartened to note that you have introduced a reading challenge to encourage pupils to read more widely and to tackle more challenging texts. The pupils told me that there is a much greater push on reading now and they enjoy reading more. Reading is also promoted through periodic research and investigational homework tasks.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the governors have made sure that procedures and documentation are up to date and fit for purpose. Recruitment vetting and systems for recording any concerns about pupil welfare meet requirements. You make sure that staff new to the school receive effective induction information so that they are in no doubt about what to do if they consider a pupil may be at risk of harm. Adults I spoke to were clear about what to do in such an event. You have produced additional useful reference information to help staff in this. Governors have conducted their own safeguarding audit, in addition to using resources from the local authority. They also have a formalised system to carry out termly checks on the condition of the school premises, which, at the time of inspection, were secure and tidy. The chair of the governing body has professional expertise in managing child protection. Where any incidents occur that relate to pupil welfare, leaders have followed procedures correctly.

Pupils feel that the school is safe and they are aware of the need for caution when using electronic communication. They say that there is no bullying 'because the headteacher gets rid of it straight away'.

Inspection findings

- You have an accurate view of the school and have rightly focused on developing mathematics and reading to accelerate pupil progress so that more pupils meet and exceed the new curriculum expectations. All staff, and especially middle leaders, have benefited from work with the Wakefield City Academy Trust and visits to other schools to glean and assimilate good practice. The local authority has provided a strong challenge to leaders to accelerate pupil progress and, as a result, leaders and staff share a common vision in moving the school forward.
- You know the pupils well. You carry out close checks on learning and have used a range of strategies to check on progress and understanding. Subject leaders have assisted in monitoring the quality of teaching and pupil progress. Governors have also checked pupils' books to pinpoint any inconsistent approaches.
- Teaching is generally effective and engages pupils. Teachers make good use of assessment, using questioning to clarify understanding, promote reflection and deepen thinking. Pupils respond to written feedback by improving their work and know that well-presented work is expected. Pupils complete homework conscientiously but it is not always checked at the same level as work in class.
- Children join the early years with skills, knowledge and understanding that are typical for their age. Throughout the school, over time, pupils have generally made good progress so that standards reached have been above national averages at all key stages, with the exception of key stage 2 outcomes in reading and mathematics in 2016. Current assessment information indicates that most cohorts are also making good progress. Leaders are aware that, where this is not the case, sustained support will need to continue.
- Pupils respond promptly to adults, so that lesson time is used productively. Behaviour around school and in the playground is calm and orderly. Pupils are friendly, polite and caring, especially towards the younger children. 'If anyone hurts themselves, we all help them,' one Year 5 pupil said. Pupils' positive attitudes and their willingness to take on roles and responsibilities are likely to serve them well when they move to secondary school.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school and good use is made of environmental science and first-hand experiences and visits to motivate pupils. Staff provide a plethora of enriching activities and parents and pupils appreciate the thought that goes in to catching pupils' interests and enthusiasms. A Year 6 pupil explained, 'This is a school that helps you to develop what you are good at.'
- The teaching of mathematics is much improved. Teachers plan cohesive sequences of learning, pitch tasks at the right level and allow pupils to move quickly on to more complex work as soon as they have demonstrated secure understanding. Pupils take delight in tackling the different 'chilli challenges'. Science topics offer opportunities to apply mathematics in context but there is room to make even wider use of mathematics across a range of subjects. Teachers check pupils' mathematical work very thoroughly and supply detailed written feedback, with examples to clarify any uncertainty. They insist that pupils explain strategies for problem-solving and this helps to crystallise thinking.

Occasionally, there is an overdependence on using cubes or making drawings for calculation tasks involving numbers beyond 20. This sometimes slows progress.

- Weaker readers are getting plenty of support from adults and the most able pupils read expressively. The new emphasis that leaders have placed on teaching higher reading skills and on reading quickly to process information is having a positive impact at both key stages 1 and 2. The teaching of phonics in the early years, however, is not consistently good. Some children, particularly the boys, are not always fully engaged in reading activities, and this slows progress.
- There are frequent opportunities for writing activities and standards across the school in writing have been above national averages for several years. Pupils' writing for a range of purposes is celebrated in eye-catching displays and the content is good. However, the approach to the teaching of handwriting and spelling in the early years and in key stage 1 is inconsistent. Some pupils struggle with letter formation and others, including the most able pupils, make spelling errors when attempting to write words that appear frequently in text.
- The school provides effective before- and after-school care for approximately 15 pupils. Pupils who attend enjoy healthy snacks and participate in a variety of games and purposeful activities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- additional support and training are provided to improve the teaching of phonics in the early years so that all groups of children are fully engaged in learning
- there is a consistent and rigorous approach to the teaching of handwriting and spelling in the early years and at key stage 1
- pupils are provided with more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills across other curriculum subjects and calculation tasks enable pupils to learn at a good rate.

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

Yours sincerely

James Reid
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, subject leaders and administrative staff. You and I jointly observed teaching and learning in all classes. I also viewed the school's latest assessment records. You and I scrutinised pupils' work in mathematics and you joined me in listening to readers. I examined documentation including the school improvement plan, the school's own self-assessment record and the local authority's latest external report, together with information published on the school's website and safeguarding records. I met with governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke to a representative of the local authority. I considered the views of parents, staff and pupils by talking to them informally, by meeting a group of key stage 2 pupils and from responses to online surveys, including Parent View.