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Mrs Lucie Forrest
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Dear Mrs Forrest

Short inspection of Windy Nook Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 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 September 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

The Rights Respecting School Award runs like a rod of steel through your school. Your focus on the well-being and development of the pupils in your care is clear to everyone. As a result, you command fierce loyalty from staff, parents and pupils. You are an approachable and visible leader who has transformed the way your school is run. One parent's comment typified that of many, saying, 'This is a school which puts its pupils at the heart of everything it does.'

Since you were appointed as headteacher, you have overhauled the way in which you track the progress that pupils are making, and the way in which you hold teachers to account for the quality of their work. You know the strengths and areas for development of your school well, and plans for improvement are incisive. Teachers welcome the increased accountability. Morale is high, and you use any monitoring activities to help your staff improve their own teaching. The 'overall effectiveness' meetings that you hold with teachers make them feel appreciated and listened to, as well as helping them improve the progress that their pupils are making. Teachers responsible for different subjects feel supported and challenged to make their subject even better at school. Other leaders at school look up to you, and are happy to be led by your example.

A pupil at your school typically feels accepted, safe and an integral part of the school community. Pupils know that they have responsibilities as well as rights. The

school council is active, and members were keen to tell me about the 'big' basketball hoops which they helped install. A 'sign squad' signs songs in assembly, not only to support deaf pupils, but also to express the ethos of the school; all different, all equal. Pupils work hard in lessons but also enjoy community events. I saw pupils practising bhangra dances for a regional competition. Parents and pupils told me about the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities available, including cookery, judo, football and 'funfit'. Parents and pupils appreciate these.

Teaching is responsive to the needs of pupils. As headteacher, you think deeply about each year group and its specific needs. You then use your staff flexibly in order to meet the needs of different classes at school. In lessons, teachers watch pupils carefully, and change tack depending upon how quickly pupils are learning, or how difficult they are finding a particular concept. By doing so, fewer pupils are either treading water or sitting confused. Teachers also use pre-unit assessments to help judge where to start a particular topic so that pupils can make a flying start.

Pupils focus well in lessons, and most do their very best to make progress. Teachers think about the ways different subjects connect and make this explicit to their pupils. For example, teachers ensure that there are opportunities to practise mathematics in different subjects such as science and geography. Pupils are increasingly confident in doing calculations. Some need more practise at solving mathematical problems, however.

You and your team have been working on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. For example, you were asked to focus on writing, and, as a result of your work, the progress that pupils made in writing in 2016 and 2017 was significantly better than the national average. In addition, you were asked to improve the way that pupils' progress is tracked. The way you now track pupils' progress allows you to identify those that need an extra boost and to offer them support accordingly.

You want the very best for your pupils, and know that there is still work to do. You are aware that the progress that pupils make in reading is not strong enough. You also know that the standards that disadvantaged pupils reach at the end of key stage 2 are not high enough and that some of these pupils need to attend school more often. Together, we noted that in mathematics, although pupils often practise calculations, some pupils spend too little time thinking through problems and explaining their thought processes. You already have plans in place to address these issues.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Policies and procedures are in place, staff training is up to date and comprehensive, and if ever you are worried about the well-being of one of your pupils, you act immediately.

A striking feature of the way in which you keep pupils safe is how safeguarding is

threaded through the curriculum. There is a list of activities that pupils are entitled to, linked to safeguarding, for each year group. As a result, pupils and parents know that there is a culture of safeguarding at school. In Year 5, for example, pupils are taught about sun safety, water safety, the firework code, drug and alcohol awareness, and the importance of healthy diets, exercise and personal hygiene, among many other issues.

Pupils feel safe. They behave well in lessons, and sensibly when moving around the building. Pupils understand the 'green, amber, red' system well, and say that teachers are consistent about how this is implemented. Pupils say that they do their best to stay 'green' and do not want to lose any golden time by moving into 'amber or red'. Pupils appreciate the 'Windy winners' assembly, where they are rewarded for working hard, or promoting the value of the month. During the inspection, teachers rewarded pupils for sporting achievements, focusing well in class, and being respectful of others, which is this month's value.

Pupils are courteous and polite. They told me that if another pupil is unkind to them, members of staff will help them to sort the situation out. They say that if ever there is any bullying, then you do your best to stop it happening. Parents, staff and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the standards of behaviour at school.

You keep a close eye on any pupils whose circumstances place them more at risk. You work well with other agencies to keep these pupils safe, and you push hard to get them additional support if it is needed. You and your attendance officer take note of any pupils who are not in school and follow this up if you are concerned.

Inspection findings

- I wanted to look at the teaching of reading during this inspection. The progress that pupils make in reading and the standards they are reaching are improving. You recognise that there was a dip in the performance of pupils in reading in Year 6 in 2017 and have acted decisively to address this. You have altered some long-term planning so that much is centred on class texts which are studied together and which form the basis of activities for pupils. You have thought deeply about enriching pupils' vocabulary. Teachers identify interesting words taken directly from the passage to be studied in advance. These form the basis of homework to be completed before lessons, so that pupils already understand more complex words before they appear in the book. This proactive approach to developing pupils' vocabulary is having a positive impact on their reading skills, but you are aware that there is work still to do.
- You help parents to support their children through parents' workshops. Parents said to me that the workshop on phonics was particularly helpful. Pupils that need that extra push with their reading have the opportunity to practise their skills using online resources. Pupils told me that they found this both helpful and motivating.
- As part of the inspection, I wanted to find out the extent to which you accurately check the standards that pupils are reaching and what you are doing to support any pupils who may need help to catch up. You know that some pupils in Year 2

need to catch up with their peers nationally, and that some pupils in Year 4 need support in mathematics. You, together with your leaders, have been keeping a close eye on this. You have made sure that these pupils have been given extra support, and this has had a positive impact. For example, a greater proportion of pupils in Year 2 reached national standards in the phonics screening check in Year 1 than did so when in early years. This shows that changes you make improve the quality of education. You have also changed the way you structure lessons as a result of the checks you have made on teaching. Mathematics lessons now start with 'speed calc', a challenge which develops pupils' ability to perform calculations at speed. Literacy lessons start with 'gap buster' to practise spelling or specific grammatical concepts. You had noticed that pupils' skills in these areas were less strong. As a result of these changes in lesson planning, pupils' confidence in these areas is increasing.

- I also looked at the quality of education of offer for disadvantaged pupils. Both you, and members of the governing body, have noticed that the progress that many of these pupils are making is strong. However, you know that some of these pupils are not reaching high enough standards to help them move from strength to strength when they reach secondary school. You have also noticed that some of these pupils do not attend school regularly enough. You are already onto these issues. Your deputy headteacher has made sure that teachers and teaching assistants know the specific additional needs of these pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants are beginning to meet their needs with greater precision.
- You have focused on developing resilience on the part of pupils. This also helps disadvantaged pupils to understand their own potential. Pupils told me that the 'yet' signs dotted around the building help them realise that anything they cannot do now, they may well be able to do in the future. 'Winners never quit' is similarly embedded into the culture, and fabric, of the school.
- I also considered how you assess subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Your deputy headteacher has been working with an 'assessment and curriculum committee' to this end. This group, consisting of teachers, parents and governors, has developed 'stages of learning' in subjects such as music and geography. These develop subject knowledge and subject-specific skills across the curriculum. Middle leaders are responsible for different subjects. They collect information about pupils' progress and shape schemes of learning to develop pupils' skills further and improve provision. This subject leadership also shapes early years provision, where bridging documents support children's development and preparation for learning different subjects in Year 1.
- The extent to which you know your school is impressive. As a result, your school development planning is precise. You are focusing on the correct areas in order to make your school even better. You and your team are committed to giving the pupils the very best education, and you are increasingly successful in doing so.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in reading continues to improve
- the standards that disadvantaged pupils reach at the end of key stage 2 increase, and their rates of attendance continue to improve
- refinements to the teaching of reasoning and problem solving in mathematics are fully embedded.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Wardle
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

As part of this inspection, I wanted to find out what you and other leaders are doing to improve the rates of progress that pupils are making in reading. I also considered the extent to which you are checking the standards that pupils are reaching in different year groups, and how you use this information to improve teaching. I looked at the standards disadvantaged pupils are reaching. In addition, I wanted to find out how you assess pupils in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics. I also wanted to find out how your curriculum helps pupils to understand how to stay safe.

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and other members of the leadership team. I also met with members of the governing body, including the chair. You joined me as I observed teaching and learning across the school. I spoke to two groups of pupils at lunchtime and spoke to others before school. I reviewed pupils' work from different year groups and from a variety of subjects, and I listened to pupils from different year groups read. You and the deputy headteacher presented information detailing pupils' progress and attainment, the school's self-evaluation document and the school development plan. I discussed the school's journey of improvement with a representative of the local authority. A variety of other documents were considered, including those relating to safeguarding and policies on the school's website.

I considered the 73 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), the 30 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 34 responses to the pupil questionnaire. I spoke to a group of parents at the beginning of the school day.