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Mrs Julie Newton
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Julie Newton

Short inspection of Broomhill First School

Following my visit to the school on 18 January 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 October 2011.

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 as headteacher in September 2012, you have provided strong leadership that has brought about further improvements to the school. You and your staff have created a caring, harmonious and inclusive school where pupils feel very safe, grow in confidence and take their learning seriously. Your caring style is underpinned by robust and effective systems to monitor the quality of teaching and the progress that individual pupils are making. Using this information, you ensure that programmes of learning and interventions are tailored to individual pupils well. As a result, the progress that pupils make is improving.

Pupils love coming to school. They talked animatedly about the topics that they are studying in class, and about the extra-curricular clubs that are on offer. They are polite, friendly and self-confident, and care about their peers. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of education on offer. Your vision to 'create a happy and caring environment in which everyone feels valued and everyone is supported to fulfil their potential' is alive at school.

You have successfully addressed areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. For example, you have continued to develop pupils' understanding of the world in which they live. Pupils value tolerance and fairness and they learn about different cultures through a varied and interesting curriculum. In addition, you have

ensured that areas of relative weakness in assessment or teaching are tackled. Staff work together to rise to these challenges and, as a result, morale is high and there is a real sense of teamwork at school.

Your focus on the quality of teaching in mathematics has had a positive impact on the progress that pupils make. Teachers are knowledgeable about the new curriculum and say that they feel confident in planning lessons that ensure that pupils make good progress.

Your review of pupils' outcomes in 2016 concluded that further improvements are needed in the teaching of English. You have correctly identified that in order for pupils to make even stronger progress their fluency and resilience needs to be improved when reading. You have also noticed that handwriting and spelling need to be a focus when teaching writing skills. Your self-evaluation and development planning are robust and accurate. These documents are helpful in ensuring that the education the pupils receive continues to be good.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality.

There is a culture of safeguarding at school. Not only are policies and procedures understood by the staff, they are brought alive through the way that the school operates. For example, your work with outside agencies is well timed and effective in supporting vulnerable pupils. Similarly, pastoral work with pupils who are feeling sad or lonely at school is strong. Staff meetings often have a safeguarding focus. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that pupils behave well. Parents overwhelmingly agree that pupils are safe and well cared for.

Pupils respond well to rules that the school puts in place to keep them safe. Many of them mentioned the 'red lines' that are painted in the playground, and how these are designed to keep them safe. They were able to articulate the reasons why they are not to cross these lines, which were linked to elements of health and safety. They also mentioned e-safety and how to keep safe online. Pupils know the importance of staying healthy. One girl swapped her pear for a banana with a friend, so they could both eat a piece of fruit. Her friend does not like bananas!

Inspection findings

- Self-evaluation systems are strong. You and other leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in order to identify areas for improvement. The processes and procedures that are in place to monitor the progress that pupils are making are finely tuned. As a result, interventions are well crafted and ensure that all pupils make progress.
- You focus on pupils as individuals, and as a result, the support and progress that different groups of pupils make is similar. For example, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting

points, as do both boys and girls.

- You are aware that the standards that pupils reach are higher in mathematics than in English, and this is a focus of your improvement plan. The progress they are making in English continues to improve.
- Teachers adapt their teaching to meet the needs of the pupils, and other adults are used well to support pupils' learning. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They have well-established routines, which helps keep good order in and around school. The topics that they plan are interesting and help engage the pupils in their learning. For example, many pupils referenced a recent piece of homework on extreme environments saying how much fun they had completing it. Teachers deal very well with any misunderstandings that pupils may have with difficult concepts.
- The behaviour of the pupils is a major strength of the school. Pupils are happy, caring and sensitive to the needs of others. They approach their lessons with positivity and excitement. They listen attentively, and try their best.
- In the early years, activities are pitched at the right level and children are very motivated to learn. They are inquisitive and focused. Adults question children well and help spark their interest in the world around them through imaginative topics and work areas. As a result, children develop positive attitudes to their learning. Their phonic development is improving, and an increasing percentage of children are reaching the expected standard, ready for starting Year 1. Reading is a focus in early years and pupils enjoy talking about and describing well-known stories. Their understanding of number is also improving.
- Your school's attendance levels have improved markedly compared to those seen last year.
- A newly reorganised governing body is beginning to give strategic challenge and support to leaders.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- progress made by pupils in reading continues to improve by focusing on their resilience and fluency when reading
- outcomes in writing improve at a faster pace, by ensuring that actions identified in your school development plan are implemented swiftly.

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

Michael Wardle
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection I met with you, members of the teaching staff, members of the governing body, and local authority representatives. I looked at a variety of documentation, including the school development plan, self-evaluation and progress information. Policies and information from the school website were taken into account, as were the opinions of staff, parents and pupils. You accompanied me on visits to classrooms. I sampled English, mathematics and topic books, and spoke to pupils about their learning to support my judgements on the progress pupils are making. I observed the behaviour of pupils in class and at other times during the school day.

Key areas looked at during the inspection

- Why are rates of attendance low and how are school leaders addressing this?
- How are school leaders ensuring that pupils make rapid progress in reading?
- How are school leaders ensuring that all pupils, including boys, reach high standards in their writing?
- How are school leaders ensuring that children in early years are making good progress in literacy and numeracy?
- Is safeguarding effective?