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Mr Andrew Cannon  
Headteacher  
Newlalthes Junior School  
Langrigg Road  
Carlisle  
Cumbria  
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Dear Mr Cannon

### **Short inspection of Newlalthes Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 May 2016, 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 January 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Your inspirational leadership has created an atmosphere where staff and pupils feel highly valued and motivated to do their best. Pupils enjoy school and make an excellent contribution to it through their impeccable behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Leaders at all levels lead improvement in their areas of responsibility successfully. Governors have an in-depth understanding of the school's performance. They ask challenging questions of all leaders and constantly seek evidence that actions have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. They are proud to be part of the school and share your ambition for the pupils.

Everyone in the school has high expectations of and for pupils. Your shared vision of 'Inspirational Learning, Aspirational Children' is realised through teaching that enthuses pupils and wide-ranging experiences that build their confidence and social skills successfully. Pupils benefit from a rich curriculum that develops their knowledge and skills in all subjects. They develop self-reliance and perseverance, for example, in carrying out investigations, solving problems and personal research. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

You have dealt with the areas for improvement that were identified at the previous inspection successfully. You have raised pupils' achievement in writing and ensure that pupils can write capably for different purposes in a range of subjects. Information and communication technology is used more effectively to enhance

teaching and learning. Pupils use their laptops confidently for research or to record their work. Technology is also used by teachers to make lessons interesting and provide pupils with visual examples. Your rewards for good attendance and work with parents of children who have been persistently absent have proved effective. Pupils' attendance is now above average. You have also ensured that pupils gain a good understanding of different cultures. They learn about different places, faiths and cultures in several subjects and develop their understanding further through their links with communities in Malawi and Zambia. Pupils are rightly proud of their fundraising, which has contributed to the building of a new school in Zambia.

You make sure that the school is continually improving and are energetically dealing with new challenges. Teachers have adapted their teaching to take account of revisions to the national curriculum and are tracking pupils' progress carefully. Pupils make good progress over time, so that by the end of Year 6 they attain standards that are above average in reading and mathematics and in line with expectations in writing. However, there is a slight dip in pupils' attainment and progress in Year 3, given their prior attainment in the key stage 1 assessments. You are rising to this challenge by taking steps to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning from the start. You are also striving to help pupils make links between their learning in different subjects and enable them to apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum. There is good capacity within the school to support further improvement.

Parents are supportive and very pleased with the education provided for their children. Those I spoke to feel the school is well run, teaching is good and 'work is demanding but pitched about right'. The responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were similarly positive. Parents are especially pleased with the way in which their children's social skills are developed and with the many opportunities children have to enrich their learning. A few parents feel that they could be better informed about their children's progress and the after-school activities that are on offer.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Policies have been revised to take account of recent legislation and staff are aware of their responsibilities. There are thorough vetting procedures to ensure safe recruitment. All staff and governors have completed relevant training, which provides them with knowledge of how to keep children safe from risk, including that associated with extremism and use of the internet. Leaders keep detailed records and are adept at identifying risk and engaging with partners to respond appropriately.

Pupils are safe in school and have a good understanding of how to keep safe online and in the community. They know about different types of bullying and say it does not happen in school. If bullying should occur, they feel it will be dealt with appropriately. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View feel their children are safe and well cared for. Typical comments were: 'My child really enjoys the social side of school and particularly the outside play areas' and 'My child can speak confidently to the teacher about any concerns there may be and they are dealt with in a delicate manner.'

## Inspection findings

- Your self-evaluation of the school's performance is accurate and provides a firm foundation on which to plan for further improvement. You make sure that staff, governors, parents and pupils can contribute their views. Your whole-school development planning consequently reflects the most important priorities to raise pupils' achievement and enrich their experiences. You make good use of the expertise and ideas of all stakeholders.
- Leaders at all levels make a significant contribution. Their improvement plans focus on the most important actions to help pupils reach the standards expected for their age in each subject. Their regular checks on teaching and pupils' progress ensure that pupils receive appropriate support if they fall behind.
- Teachers' performance is managed effectively. Teachers receive appropriate training to develop their skills and learn from good practice. New teachers and those who have taken on leadership roles recently are supported well.
- Governors are well informed and have a good understanding of school performance information. They check that development plans are followed through and have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. They have an appropriate overview of staff performance and salary progression. The website was updated during the inspection and complies with all requirements.
- Teaching has a consistently good impact and assessment is used effectively to plan next steps in pupils' learning. Activities are planned carefully to develop pupils' knowledge and skills and encourage them to apply what they know to solve problems and carry out investigations. Pupils' reading skills are developed extremely well, so pupils become discerning and enthusiastic readers. Good-quality feedback and marking helps pupils to improve their work and extends learning.
- The vast majority of pupils currently in school make expected progress in all subjects, from their various starting points, and some make better than expected progress. Consequently, the vast majority are achieving standards that are expected for their age in each year group. Teachers make sure that pupils develop their knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects, including science, history, geography, art and design technology, and not just in those that are tested.
- The most-able pupils are usually challenged appropriately to deepen their learning. There are occasions, however, when their progress is not as rapid as it could be, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability receive good support in class and in small groups, so they make good progress. Teaching assistants have received additional training and are deployed effectively to help pupils catch up in mathematics, reading and writing.
- The curriculum covers a wide range of subjects and is enriched by many additional activities that enable pupils to develop their creative, artistic, musical and sporting skills. They thoroughly enjoy 'Forest School' lessons and participate eagerly in the many after-school clubs.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed very

effectively in lessons and through opportunities to take responsibility, for example as peer mentors and school councillors. Pupils enjoy the challenges offered through the 'sports passport' and the demanding 'headteacher's challenges', which they work on independently.

- The pupil premium (additional funding that the school receives to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority) is used appropriately to enhance the learning of disadvantaged pupils. The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally is closing. Governors check that the funding is used wisely but are aware that they could be better informed about the impact it has on individual pupils' progress and personal development.
- The additional sports funding is used to broaden pupils' experience and participation in sports. Alongside the more traditionally offered sports such as football, netball, gymnastics and athletics, pupils can develop their skills in archery, golf and mini tennis. Pupils are proud of their success in sports tournaments and events.
- Good teaching and the inspiring curriculum motivate pupils so they develop very positive attitudes to learning. They are fully engaged in lessons, persevere with challenging tasks and present their work with care. Pupils' behaviour around school is excellent. They are polite, courteous and eager to share their enthusiasm for school.
- Effective partnership working enhances the work of the school. Your participation in the Carlisle Schools' Partnership enables staff to share good practice through subject networks, moderation of pupils' work and peer review. You have successfully contributed to the improvement of another school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- transition procedures are developed further to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning when they start school, especially in mathematics
- mathematical skills are developed in subjects across the curriculum where applicable
- in line with the aims of your improvement planning, pupils are helped to make links in their learning and apply the knowledge and skills learned in one subject to other subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Jean Olsson-Law  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met with you, two senior leaders and two members of the governing body, including the chair. I spoke with a local authority adviser by telephone. I visited six classrooms to observe learning and looked at pupils' work. I spoke with pupils during lessons and in two meetings. I looked at your assessment information, self-evaluation, action planning and safeguarding procedures. I spoke with several parents at the start of the day and took account of 21 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents. I also took account of 11 staff questionnaires.