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Mr David Spruce
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Dear Mr Spruce

Short inspection of Penruddock Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 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 February 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your mission to provide 'a caring community where every child is nurtured and valued, empowered and inspired to achieve' is upheld by everyone in school. You have successfully extended the school's provision to include three-year-old children. Leadership has been devolved effectively and new leadership roles have been created to capitalise on the leadership skills and expertise of staff across the school. Governors have a firm grasp of how well the school is doing; they ask leaders searching questions and provide good support to secure further improvement. Staff help pupils develop valuable personal and social skills as well as promoting a love of learning. Morale is high and staff say they feel motivated by your inspiring leadership. Typical comments include, 'the school is a wonderful place to work' and 'we are well supported and encouraged by the headteacher.'

Pupils make at least good progress from their various starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Children get off to a good start in the early years and continue to make good progress in each year group. They achieve especially well in writing and often attain above the expected standard for their age. Pupils have many opportunities to solve problems and carry out investigations in mathematics, which helps them to deepen their understanding. They enjoy reading and the dips in attainment in reading and the phonics screening which were evident in 2015 have been halted. Pupils' excellent behaviour makes a notable contribution to their many achievements. Pupils of all ages work and play happily together, showing

consideration and respect for each other. They are highly motivated and take pride in their work.

You have continued to build on the strengths identified at your previous inspection. The enthusiastic approach of teachers and teaching assistants is a key factor in the school's success. They plan interesting activities that stimulate pupils' imagination, help them grow in confidence and develop a range of skills. For example, pupils thoroughly enjoyed collaborating with pupils from other local schools to perform 'A Midsummers Night's Dream' at the Theatre by the Lake. Their involvement in charity projects help them to develop an understanding of life in areas affected by war and drought. Such activities help pupils develop enterprise and planning skills, become resourceful and socially adept. Pupils are prepared very well for their move to secondary school and beyond.

You have made sure that the areas for improvement that were identified at the school's previous inspection have been dealt with effectively. You have developed the school's approach to marking and feedback to make sure pupils are aware of how well they are doing and know how to improve their work. Pupils in class 1 (including children in early years and pupils in Year 1) are given effective feedback to take their learning forward. The 'learning journeys' of the younger children are of high quality and inform the next steps in their learning across all areas. Older pupils in class 2 and class 3 benefit from helpful comments from their teachers and have been taught to assess their own and each other's work effectively. Your approach to checking on the quality of teaching has improved, with more of a focus on evaluating its impact on pupils' learning over time.

All staff and governors have contributed to self-evaluation and improvement planning, so all are fully aware of the school's strengths and priorities for further development. Your improvement planning is focused on the right priorities. You have set challenging targets for pupils' achievement and identified appropriate actions to continue to improve teaching, assessment and leadership. You are aware that the curriculum planning requires further development to ensure that teaching supports progression in learning in all subjects as effectively as it does in English and mathematics. The progress of the most-able pupils is also an area that could be developed further. While there is some good practice in class 3, the most-able pupils in other classes are not given extension work that is challenging enough. There is a great deal of good practice within school on which to base further development and good capacity in leadership to secure more improvement.

There was a high return to the online questionnaire, 'Parent View'. The vast majority of parents feel that they have a positive relationship with the school and most would recommend it. The interesting activities and development of pupils' health and social skills are frequently praised. 'Staff make learning fun and inspire the children to be independent and use their imagination' was typical of the many positive comments. Many parents referred to the 'great leadership of the headteacher' and the 'dedication and hard work' of staff. A small minority of parents feel that communication with them is not good and that their children are not making progress as well as they could.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Suitable checks are carried out when staff are recruited. All staff and governors have completed relevant safeguarding training so they know what to do if they have any safeguarding concerns. Designated safeguarding leaders have completed training on the 'Prevent' duty and there are arrangements in hand to share this with all staff. Behaviour logs, risk assessments and records of work with other agencies are suitably detailed.

Pupils feel extremely safe and well looked after in school. There are very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour or bullying. On the rare occasions when these have occurred, appropriate action has been taken to resolve issues. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe from different types of bullying and when they are online. They attend regularly and are punctual. All parents who responded to Parent View feel that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved and say their children are happy and feel safe.

Inspection findings

- You provide clear direction and inspirational leadership. You have built on the strengths of staff successfully and developed their skills. The recent appointment of upper and lower school leaders has had a positive impact. They lead improvements in their areas of responsibility successfully and check carefully on the impact of these initiatives.
- Governors have an in-depth understanding of how well the school is doing using information from a range of sources, including information about pupils' progress and regular reports from school leaders. They have high ambitions for pupils and high expectations of staff and leaders.
- Teachers capture pupils' interest and fire their imagination through stimulating activities. Pupils say they particularly enjoy the cross-curricular topic work, sports and learning French. Teaching develops pupils' understanding of the wider world and enables them to apply their skills in different contexts. Pupils' experience is enriched by visits and visitors to the school.
- Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and are able to develop their skills further through training. They make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Children enter the school with knowledge and skills that are mostly in line with expectations for their age, although this can vary depending on their pre-school experiences. Children get off to a good start and make good progress in the early years. They are motivated to learn because activities are exciting and they feel very safe. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development is above average, so they are prepared well for key stage 1.
- Pupils continue to make at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics in each year group. The vast majority are working at standards expected for their age and some are exceeding expected standards.

- Accurate assessment and thorough tracking of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics make sure that pupils who need extra help are identified quickly and given appropriate support. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are supported well in lessons, small groups or individually.
- The most-able pupils make good progress over time but do not make the best possible progress in some classes. This is because the extension work they are given does not fully challenge their thinking as much as it could, particularly in mathematics. Sometimes they are not sure what they should do when they have finished their work, as they wait for others to finish.
- Although teaching is interesting for pupils, it does not provide them with progression in developing their knowledge and skills to the same extent in all subjects. Pupils do not make as much progress in subjects such as history, geography, art and design and technology as they do in English, mathematics, science and sports.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of physical activities they are offered as part of taught curriculum and in additional clubs. The additional sports funding is used effectively to broaden pupils' participation and develop teachers' skills. Participation in a dance programme and the Eden Valley Schools Sports Partnership enhances the school's provision well. Pupils participate in a range of sports, competitions and activities with children from other schools. They develop good skills and are rightly proud of their achievement in tournaments and competitions.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed very successfully from the early years onwards. Pupils experience wonder in their learning and develop highly effective social skills as they support and challenge each other. They learn about British values and other cultures and faiths in many different learning activities and appreciate the importance of respecting and understanding diversity. They are prepared very well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are aware of issues and challenges that people face, both in the locality and globally. Their fundraising for children in rural Tanzania and work in the local community is commendable. They are right to be proud of their work to create a footpath in the village.
- The small amount of funding the school receives to support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Pupils participate in enriching activities and are supported effectively in class according to their needs.
- You and other local headteachers have established effective partnership working to develop leadership and enhance pupils' experiences in all participating schools. The Rural Penrith Cluster facilitates networking and the sharing of best practice and resources. The 'triad' arrangements for peer review, whereby headteachers from three local schools support each other reviewing the quality of education in each school, work effectively to support and challenge school leaders.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- curriculum planning enables all pupils to build on their knowledge and skills progressively in all subjects, in line with the requirements of the new national curriculum
- the most-able pupils are provided with work that is difficult enough to deepen their learning and are provided with tasks for when they finish their class work.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner 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 had meetings with you, senior leaders, the local authority adviser, all staff and three governors, including the chair. I visited all classes with you, where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils. I met with all the Year 6 pupils and some younger pupils. I spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school and took account of 47 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire. I also took account of eight responses to the online questionnaire from staff. I looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment and at your self-evaluation and action planning. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe and records of training, safeguarding checks and behaviour management.