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Mrs Janet Jacques
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Jacques

Short inspection of Oakfield Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 8 December 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

Since the last inspection, you have become the executive headteacher across the hard federation of Oakfield Junior and Infant schools. There is now one governing body for both schools. You have worked hard to maximise the benefits of this organisation to develop the quality of teaching and learning and leadership capacity in the school. Along with the head of school, you have accurately identified the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. The development plan, well aligned to your self-evaluation, has appropriate actions to drive further improvement. Governors check regularly that this plan is improving outcomes for your pupils. The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your staff have created an inclusive, friendly school with a calm working atmosphere. Pupils feel safe, grow in confidence, and develop good learning behaviours. The curriculum ensures pupils develop good personal skills and they see themselves as global citizens with roles and responsibilities. Equally, you, your staff and governors set high expectations and aspire to help all pupils achieve the very best outcomes. Pupils generally make good progress from their starting points and reach at least the standards expected for their age. You and your staff check if there are any signs that pupils' progress is stalling and promptly respond to address this.

You have worked hard to tackle the two areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. First, you have continued to work to improve achievement in

writing. As a result, in 2016 by the end of Year 6 the proportion of pupils working at the expected level was above that found nationally. You recognise there is still further work to improve the progress of the most able pupils and increase the proportions of pupils working at greater depth. Your work to improve pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling is also paying dividends. Higher proportions of pupils achieve the expected levels in this subject, compared to the national average, and more of your pupils are working at the higher standard.

The second area to address, develop leadership and management, has been tackled. You have made good use of the opportunities provided by the federation. Middle leaders have improved their skills by working with other leaders in the infant school. English and mathematics subject leaders across the schools now collaborate to develop well thought through improvement plans. You are outward looking and take advantage of relevant training for staff and leaders provided by the local authority. The link governor role sharpens their understanding of the school's priorities. This is helping to increase the level of governor support and challenge.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that current safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are of a high quality. Leaders complete safeguarding checks for all staff, governors and volunteers. Safeguarding policies, which meet current requirements, are in place and all staff understand the procedures and their own responsibilities. Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training so that they know how to keep pupils safe, including recent training about how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take and are confident that staff will help them if they ever have concerns. Pupils say incidents of bullying are rare in their school. The school's records show that staff deal promptly with the infrequent incidents of misbehaviour or bullying. School leaders follow up the very rare racist or homophobic incidents rigorously. Pupils, parents and staff agree that the school is a safe place to be.

Inspection findings

- You and your head of school have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This is because you review the quality of teaching regularly, along with the impact this has on pupils' outcomes. You organise appropriate support to strengthen the teaching quality where required.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and priorities for the school. Link governors provide appropriate strategic challenge to subject leaders. For example, while new to the role, the literacy link governor has begun to provide challenge to improve further pupils' progress in writing.
- The focused efforts of the English subject leader to improve pupils' writing outcomes are having a positive impact. Pupils make good progress in reading across the school. By Year 6, the proportion of pupils working at the expected

level is above that found nationally and more pupils are working at the higher standard. In writing, the use of quality texts is stimulating pupils' interest in literature and providing useful models to improve their writing. Year 5 pupils from a range of abilities read these texts with confidence, fluency and evident enjoyment. Year 6 pupils were keen to explain how reading the text used in their lessons was improving their writing, and also challenging their thinking about moral dilemmas, such as, 'Should horses be used in war?' In 2016, the progress of the most able pupils in writing was significantly below that found nationally. Leaders and governors recognise that this is an area for further improvement and your plans have specific actions to improve the proportion of these pupils working at a greater depth.

- The mathematics leader provides effective leadership to drive improvement in this subject. Teachers are beginning to provide more opportunities for pupils to use reasoning and problem solving. You recognise that this is still 'a work in progress' and not yet consistently applied across the school. School initiatives, such as the mathematics careers week and weekly mathematics challenges, are raising the profile of mathematics around the school. In 2016, while overall standards in mathematics were high, the most able pupils' progress in mathematics was significantly below that found nationally. The mathematics subject leader has promptly analysed pupils' answers to identify areas of the mathematics curriculum which require strengthening. Actions to address this are already in place.
- Your systems for measuring and recording pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics are generating useful information. This is helping teachers to match teaching more closely to pupils' needs. Leaders use this information to good effect. For example, your analysis of the pupil progress information assists you with improvement planning and resource deployment. This approach has identified the need to provide additional teaching time for the current Year 6 to accelerate their progress and achieve stronger results at the end of the year.
- Overall, your school attendance level is higher than that found nationally. This is because pupils understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality. You analyse individual pupil's absence levels carefully. If they are a concern, you take prompt action to provide guidance and support for pupils and their families.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the plans to improve pupils' outcomes in writing are fully implemented, including ensuring that the most able pupils are provided with work which will enable them to work at greater depth
- teachers further develop the use of reasoning and problem solving in mathematics lessons and ensure that the most able pupils work at the higher standards.

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 Reeves
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you, the head of school and the English and mathematics subject leaders. I talked with pupils about what it feels like to be a member of the school community. I held discussions with your school improvement partner and with three governors who were able to provide me with additional information. I also took into account school documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website. I considered the 72 responses to the parent questionnaire, Parent View. I also reviewed the five responses to the staff questionnaire. Alongside you and the head of school, I visited five classes to observe teaching and learning, during which time I listened to pupils from a range of abilities read. I looked at pupils' English and mathematics work to help evaluate the quality of teaching and learning over time. I reviewed behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding.

This inspection particularly focused upon the following aspects of the school's work:

- the effectiveness of the leadership arrangements in the school since the federation with Oakfield Infant School, including the impact of actions to address the areas for improvement in the previous inspection report
- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in writing and mathematics; and current pupils' progress in these subjects
- the effectiveness of the school's approaches to assessing and recording pupil progress information
- the impact of actions taken by leaders and staff to improve pupils' attendance levels, particularly for pupils with high levels of absence.