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Miss Angela Hunter  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Hunter

### **Short inspection of Burradon Community Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 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 November 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. A delightfully cheerful and welcoming ethos is well embedded and a tantalising hubbub of learning is immediately palpable on entering your happy school. You lead with good humour and inclusivity, bringing everyone on board and driving improvement with a steady but relentless passion that holds children at its core. Only the very best will do. Leaders, staff, pupils and parents are inspired to work collaboratively and hold high ambitions for all pupils. All feel part of the rich tapestry of effective teaching and learning that has been woven across key stages. Parents, pupils and staff are in complete agreement that children are safe, well looked after and making good progress in your capable and caring hands.

Your 'can do' attitude means that you have managed instability in terms of staffing skilfully. You anticipate and address issues head-on, keeping parents and staff fully involved and informed. Unavoidable changes to staffing in the early years recently have benefited from your solution-focused approach. While teaching and learning remain good overall, you are appropriately utilising some external expertise to ensure that high-quality provision and standards are maintained during this period of turbulence. Local authority early years consultants and subject specialists are supporting your endeavours effectively.

Improving pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics in key stage 1 was a recommendation from the previous inspection. Leaders and staff have tackled this

robustly, successfully raising the profile of mathematics across the school. A range of creative initiatives allow pupils to practise and apply their understanding and skills more consistently across key stages. In 2016, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards in mathematics in both key stages 1 and 2 exceeded those seen nationally.

The previous inspection also tasked leaders with creating improved systems for measuring the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils. You rose to the challenge. Assessment practices in school have been carefully adjusted to capture more precisely the extent and rates of different groups' progress. The majority of teachers use this information expertly to plan effectively for pupils, based precisely on their needs and existing skills. In 2016, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching age-related expectations in all subjects in key stage 2 exceeded the national average. This was a significant achievement attributable, at least in part, to these more incisive practices. You have correctly identified that additional fine-tuning of assessment systems would allow closer scrutiny of the progress of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, in each year group.

Improving community cohesion was an additional area for improvement from the previous inspection. This is a school firmly at the heart of its community. You and other leaders reach out, getting involved and complementing the local community. The school's proud part in restoring the 'Burradon mining banner' was of particular significance to the whole community. A reciprocal relationship is evident. British values are also very effectively fostered, demonstrating your commitment to the wider community. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the rule of law, liberty, respect for others and democracy. Teachers successfully develop associated concepts in a purposeful manner that is in keeping with pupils' ages and learning needs.

You have a clear understanding of the next steps for your school. In pursuing excellence, you have accurately identified that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, require further challenge in some areas. In key stage 1, you are rightly focused on deepening pupils' mathematical fluency, reasoning and problem-solving skills. In key stage 2, reading extended prose across genres with increasing depths of understanding is vital if more pupils are to gain a greater depth of understanding and reach higher standards in 2017. In 2016, the proportions of pupils reaching greater depth and high scores in these areas were lower than the national averages, an issue about which you are acutely aware and determined to resolve.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Staff, pupils and parents agree that children are well cared for and safe. You work conscientiously to ensure that parents and pupils understand the significance of good attendance and punctuality. Consequently, pupils' attendance and punctuality have improved and are good. No groups are hampered by regular absence.

Staff and governors are well trained and up to date with the most recent guidance

and information about safeguarding and child protection. This means that adults are well equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to ensure that pupils are kept safe and free from harm. Records, including checks on staff suitability, are detailed and well maintained. You take decisive action and work proactively with families and other agencies to protect vulnerable pupils.

Pupils are emphatic in their belief that bullying is not a problem in their school. They 'show racism the red card' and know that any 'little hiccups' are managed in a firm, consistent and fair manner by all adults in school. Teachers were described by pupils as 'absolutely lovely' and 'very good at resolving the occasional rare dispute'. Pupils are confident that their concerns will be listened to, while 'worry boxes' and 'suggestion boxes' help to ensure that their voices are heard. Behaviour is managed by you and your staff in a positive and empowering manner, hence the school's positive ethos.

Teachers support pupils effectively to understand the benefits and potential risks of information technology. As a result, pupils use the internet and technology responsibly, showing genuine appreciation for the school's 'safe search filters'. They value teachers for 'keeping an eye on them' and understand why and how they can keep themselves safe online.

### **Inspection findings**

- Your leadership is appreciated by all who work with you. There is unanimous agreement between local authority partners, governors and staff that you have been pivotal in the school's continued success. Staff value the frank, constructive feedback that you and other leaders offer. They are also grateful for the regular good-quality professional development opportunities that are made available to them. A culture of sharing of good practice within and across schools is firmly established.
- Over time you have successfully improved the quality of teaching and learning. In 2016, the proportion of pupils reaching age-related expectations in all subjects in both key stages 1 and 2 exceeded the national averages. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, particularly in science, English and mathematics. The majority of teachers explain terminology and concepts clearly and succinctly to pupils, enabling them to acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding and to make good progress. Some of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, complete work rapidly, however, before waiting patiently for further challenge or adult direction. Progress for this group slows. You recognise that further work is needed to increase the proportion of pupils reaching a greater depth of learning in reading in key stage 2 and mathematics in key stage 1.
- Leaders and staff monitor the progress and attainment of pupils carefully and at frequent intervals. This information is used to make sure that planned tasks and activities are matched precisely to the needs of individuals and different groups of pupils. The manner in which the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are tracked, however, is less precise and therefore less effective.

This is an area that you have aptly identified for improvement.

- In the early years, instability in staffing has recently affected the consistency of teaching and learning. A proportion of children enter with skills and abilities that are below those typically found in children of their age. While most children continue to make good progress from their different starting points, some are insufficiently challenged. You are mindful of the need to ensure that progress and outcomes for early years children do not stall and have taken appropriate action to address these issues.
- Improved teaching of phonics in Year 1 means that most pupils learn the sounds that letters make quickly. The majority of pupils now use this knowledge more successfully in their reading and writing. Lower-ability pupils who read to the inspector employed their phonics skills well to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. In 2016, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check improved, falling just short of the national average.
- The behaviour of your inquisitive, bubbly pupils is splendid. Lunchtimes and breaks are enjoyable, sociable affairs. Pupils are very considerate of each other, adults and visitors. They listen carefully to questions and instructions, responding politely and promptly. A feeling of pride and respect for others are tangible. Links with the local community and 'the history of our mining village' are prized. The pupil council is held in high regard. Pupils have a clear understanding of this group's role and function, knowing that its members represent their wider views and act on their behalf. The principles of democracy are well entrenched.
- Governors bring a broad set of skills to Burradon. They share your vision for the school and offer significant support and challenge to ensure that it is realised. You and other leaders are held firmly to account for the progress of pupils and the school's performance in the national arena. To this end, governors stringently monitor the use and effectiveness of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Governors conduct regular visits to the school, assuring themselves that aims are being met and making themselves visible and available to staff and parents.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the good quality of teaching, learning and provision in the early years is maintained over time
- the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are challenged effectively and consistently, so that they make rapid progress and achieve depths of learning in mathematics in key stage 1 and reading in key stage 2
- assessment systems are refined to enable closer scrutiny of the progress of the most able groups across all year groups.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona Manuel  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders, subject leaders and governors. I took account of the 36 parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I met with a group of boys and talked with pupils and staff informally during breaks and in lessons. I considered the 25 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire, as well as the 92 responses to the pupil survey. I examined pupils' work and evaluated information about the progress of pupils. I considered a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and records regarding behaviour and safety. I also met with a representative from the local authority. During this inspection, I paid particular attention to mathematics in key stage 1 and boys' reading in key stage 2. I also looked closely at the monitoring of teaching and learning and the school's work to promote British values.