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Ms Rachel Woods
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Rachel Woods

Short inspection of Whitehouse Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your leadership team, including governors, have worked hard to create an inclusive school that reflects your aims and ambitions. You have created an ethos in which everyone is valued and their individual uniqueness is celebrated. You and your team continue to identify and meet the diverse needs of your school community. You have established and nurtured a place in which high-quality relationships between pupils and adults, based on mutual respect and openness, are central to the school's success.

Pupils say bullying is rare and they feel safe in school. When they do have concerns, they are confident that they have a trusted adult to turn to who will resolve their issues quickly and fairly. Pupils are courteous, well mannered and polite. They show consideration towards each other and adults. They play well together at playtimes and move around school in an orderly fashion. In lessons, pupils settle quickly to their work and listen attentively.

You and your governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. Governors have a clear understanding of, and are knowledgeable about, the key priorities for improvement. Recent changes have further enhanced their skills, sharpness and ability to challenge and support school leaders.

Assessment of learning, showing what pupils can do and what they know, is reliable and secure, including for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This enables teachers to plan learning that meets the current needs of pupils well and informs the school's priorities for improvement.

Within the additional resource provision, which supports a number of pupils with moderate learning difficulties and where assessments are more complex, staff work hard and ensure that pupils thrive and are supported well. All pupils make at least expected progress from their various starting points and most make better than expected progress. This is because teaching is sharp and responsive to the individual needs of the pupils. In Year 6 in 2016, these pupils did not sit formal tests.

You and your staff continue to provide the strengths identified at the previous inspection, and foster a respect for learning through effective teaching and varied opportunities to apply and deepen learning. You remain an inclusive community. Where issues were identified at the last inspection, these have been addressed and you have continued to maintain a focus on these areas for further development. For example, the guidance given to pupils on how to improve their writing has seen the progress pupils make match and sometimes exceed that seen nationally. Subsequently, in 2015 you acted promptly and addressed an issue with phonics. When challenges arise, such as in attendance and the quality of early years provision, the action you take has a positive impact.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff are sharply focused on ensuring pupil safety, both in school and beyond. Secure systems and procedures are in place and kept under review to ensure good practice is maintained. Staff and governors receive frequent training. Training focuses on keeping up to date with lessons to be learned from serious incidents and concerns elsewhere, and tackling issues pertinent to the school and the community it serves. You and your senior leaders also work beyond the school to help support strategic coordination of multi-agency working to ensure the best possible provision for vulnerable families and children.

Inspection findings

- Pupils continue to make good progress across school. Assessment results show that, in Year 6 in 2016, pupils achieved outcomes better than those seen nationally from their various starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils also matched and exceeded the progress made by other pupils nationally in all subjects. As a consequence, these pupils are well placed to make the most of their secondary education.
- The shortfalls in pupils' understanding and skills in phonics by the end of Year 1 in 2015 were addressed by the end of Year 2. This meant that pupils secured stronger outcomes, in line with those seen nationally in their writing but not fully in their reading outcomes. This shortfall has now been successfully addressed in Year 3. In addition, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, now achieve better

outcomes in Year 1 than nationally.

- Attendance dropped sharply last year. Pupils who fail to attend school regularly, especially disadvantaged pupils, have been an important factor in this decline. While complex issues for some pupils explained some of the differences, school leaders have taken relentless action to support and increasingly challenge families to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Home visits, texts, letters and the use of targeted agency intervention has seen attendance improve recently to nearly match that seen nationally. The number of children who miss school frequently has also fallen to match that seen nationally. However, it still remains too high for some disadvantaged pupils.
- Early years provision has been recently extended and now includes a small number of two-year-olds. They receive support from a key person and effective care, support and guidance that meets their emotional and developmental needs, which enables them to settle quickly.
- In Reception, the number of children getting a good level of development has increased at a faster rate than seen nationally, but is still too low. Turbulence in staffing has meant children's progress from their varying starting points was not strong enough by the end of Reception in 2016. School leaders have addressed this. Staffing has been stabilised and provision is improving. As a result, children's progress is now accelerating. The vast majority of children are now making expected progress and many are doing better than this.
- Your work to reduce the differences in outcomes for vulnerable pupils, including low attainers and disadvantaged pupils, is a strength of the school. This is because systematic reviews of the information about pupils' progress show where gaps in pupils' learning may be emerging. This results in well-targeted support to help individuals or groups of pupils catch up. It also helps teachers plan learning that pushes the most able pupils to deepen their understanding and apply this in different contexts. As a result, these pupils make rapid progress and an increasing proportion exceed expectations.
- The teaching of writing was a priority following the last inspection. Improved standards of writing are evident in pupils' work. They take increasing pride in the presentation of their work. This is because the quality of teaching is generally good and improving, and tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils have a positive attitude to writing and a good understanding of what is required to develop their learning further.
- Pupils talk confidently about bullying in all its forms and are clear that all forms of bullying, including homophobic bullying, will be treated equally seriously. Pupils say that bullying is infrequent; they feel safe and are clear about what to do if concerns arise. Additionally, pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, school life in general and enjoy their lessons, especially mathematics. They feel well cared for and looked after.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent improvements in attendance are maintained and actions to ensure disadvantaged pupils attend more regularly are intensified
- current rates of progress across the early years are maintained and built on to ensure that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development closely matches that seen nationally.

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

Jonathan Brown
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders and a group of governors. I spoke with a range of pupils including a selected group of pupils about the school and listened to some read. I reviewed information from the online questionnaire, Parent View. I evaluated recent information provided by the school about the progress pupils are making and I looked in pupils' books. I was particularly interested in seeing how the school addresses the following:

- levels of attendance
- support for pupils in the additional resource provision
- early years provision
- pupils' progress in reading in key stage 1
- the effectiveness of safeguarding.

I looked at the information provided on the school website. I visited several classrooms to observe lessons.