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Miss Kay Hemmings  
Headteacher  
Tanfield Lea Community Primary School  
Tanfield Lea  
Stanley  
County Durham  
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Dear Miss Hemmings

### **Short inspection of Tanfield Lea Community Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 April 2012.

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

Since the last inspection, you have provided committed and perceptive leadership. This has ensured that pupils receive good teaching in a calm and purposeful learning environment, which enables them to develop personally and academically. Along with your deputy headteacher and governors, you have accurately identified the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. The school's self-evaluation and improvement plan clearly identify the priorities for improving the school further. The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your staff have created a caring and friendly school where pupils grow in confidence, and develop good learning behaviours. Clear next steps in learning and high staff expectations help pupils aspire to achieve the very best outcomes. You and your staff are reflective educators, searching for and developing better practice to improve outcomes for pupils further. The online parent questionnaire, Parent View, shows high levels of parental satisfaction with the school.

You and your staff have successfully tackled the area identified for improvement at the previous inspection. The actions taken to further increase the effectiveness of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress have had a positive impact. You have successfully reviewed your approaches to informing pupils about the improvements they are showing in their work and what their next steps in learning are. Coaching approaches and the recently introduced systems of recording lessons enable the sharing of effective teaching strategies and encourage staff to reflect on how to

improve their teaching further. Your analysis shows that there is further work to do to improve pupils' progress in reading in order to improve the proportions of pupils who are achieving the higher standards. You, your leaders and governors are taking prompt action to address this.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You, your staff and governors give the highest priority to keeping pupils safe. Leaders and governors have ensured that current safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are of a high quality. Leaders complete careful safeguarding checks for all staff, governors and volunteers. The safeguarding policy meets the current national requirements and staff understand the procedures and their own responsibilities. Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training so they know how to keep pupils safe, including training about how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Safeguarding leaders manage referrals to other agencies effectively and the headteacher has a determined approach to following up any safeguarding cases.

Your curriculum helps pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They know the different forms that bullying can take and know that staff will help them if they ever have concerns. The school's records show that incidents of bullying, including racist or homophobic incidents, are quickly addressed by the staff.

### **Inspection findings**

- You and your governors have managed changes to leadership and staffing since the last inspection effectively. As a result, you have maintained the good quality of teaching and leadership capacity has increased. Strong support ensures that staff who are new to the school develop important teaching and leadership skills to fulfil their roles successfully. Staff have a good understanding of your plans for continued improvement.
- The subject leaders for English have a good understanding of the priorities to improve pupils' outcomes. They have rightly focused on improving pupils' reading outcomes while at the same time keeping a careful eye on ensuring that pupils' writing outcomes continue to improve. Teachers have responded well to training and in the lessons which we visited together we noted clear evidence that they are putting this into practice. As a result, older pupils are developing their understanding of texts and are becoming more skilled at using more advanced comprehension skills. Staff use well-targeted interventions to help pupils who are not working at the expected standards in reading to catch up quickly. Reading competitions in school are raising the profile of reading and encouraging pupils to read quality texts. Your pupil progress information shows that while there is an improving picture in pupils' reading outcomes, there is more work to do to improve the numbers of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who are working at the higher standards.
- The teaching of phonics is well structured and teachers carefully match the work to pupils' levels of development. As a result, the overall proportion of Year 1

pupils who achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check was very close to that found nationally in 2016. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved the expected standard dipped and this increased the difference in their achievement when compared to other pupils nationally. Leaders and staff take prompt action to help pupils who need extra support to improve their phonics skills. Consequently, the vast majority of these pupils catch up quickly. For example, in 2016 all Year 2 pupils were working at the expected standard in phonics.

- The subject leaders for mathematics have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching of mathematics. They carefully check that teachers respond to training and guidance. As a result, pupils make good progress in mathematics. In 2016, pupils' progress by the end of key stage 2 was significantly better than that found nationally. In key stage 1, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected and greater depth standards were higher than the national averages.
- Overall, your school attendance levels are higher than those found nationally. This is because good attendance has a high profile around the school and pupils understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality. However, the levels of absence for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs have been too high in the past. Wherever pupils' absence levels are a concern, you and your parent support adviser take prompt action to provide guidance and support for pupils and their families. This has a positive impact on improving attendance levels in the vast majority of instances.
- Leaders and staff provide good opportunities for pupils' personal development. This has a positive impact on their behaviour in lessons and during playtimes and lunchtimes. For example, the increased opportunities for pupils to engage in cooperative play using a wide range of resources provide a very purposeful use of pupils' lunchtime. Your evaluation shows the positive impact of this work. My own observations of lunchtime confirm your view, and pupils told me how much they valued these opportunities.
- Throughout the inspection pupils behaved very well, displayed good manners and their relationships with staff and their peers were exceedingly positive. Since the last inspection, you have employed a behaviour support leader. This is helping to provide additional guidance and mentoring for the small numbers of pupils who need support to improve their behaviour.
- Generally, children in the early years make good progress from their starting points. In 2016, children's outcomes by the end of Reception improved, which meant more children were well prepared to start Year 1. However, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been below the national average for the last two years. Furthermore, the difference between the proportions of disadvantaged children achieving a good level of development compared to other pupils nationally has not diminished over this period. You and your early years leader have a good understanding of the priorities to improve outcomes further for all early years children. Early years staff plan learning to meet children's learning needs and interests. Careful assessments are made to check children's progress. The early years leader completes detailed analyses of individual and overall children's progress. This includes analyses of key groups

such as girls and boys and disadvantaged children. This information shows that current Reception children, including disadvantaged children, are making good progress. As a result, your predictions for children's outcomes at the end of the year are for further improvement. Your mid-year assessments indicate that you are on track to achieve these results.

- Plans are in place to increase the capacity for the pre-school numbers attending your school from September 2017. You, your early years leader and governors identify the potential this has to accelerate children's progress and increase the numbers achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception.
- Governors are supportive of the school and understand the community it serves. They have a good understanding of the school's priorities and they check carefully that pupils' outcomes are improving. They ensure effective challenge to leaders and keep a careful eye on the budget spending to ensure that resources provide good value for money. For example, they fully understand the need to improve pupils' reading outcomes and have taken appropriate strategic decisions to target resources for driving this improvement.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- planned actions to increase the proportions of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who achieve the higher standards in reading are completed and that leaders check to ensure that these actions have the required impact
- planned actions for further improving early years provision and children's outcomes, including using the opportunities provided by the forthcoming expansion in the numbers of children attending the school's pre-school provision, are implemented effectively.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children and adult services for Durham. 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 deputy headteacher and the subject leaders for English, mathematics and the early years. I also met with the behaviour leader. I observed and spoke with pupils during playtime, lunchtime and at other times during the day. I held discussions with a

representative from the local authority and with four governors who were able to provide me with additional information. I took into account school documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website. I considered the 98 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View. I reviewed the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 29 responses to the pupil questionnaire. Along with you, I visited 11 classes to observe teaching and learning, during which time I listened to pupils from a range of abilities read. I looked at pupils' mathematics and English work to help evaluate the quality of teaching and learning over time. I considered behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding.