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Mr Carl Faulkner
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Dear Mr Faulkner

Short inspection of Normanby Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 May 2017 with Ofsted Inspector, Robert Jones, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in May 2010. An interim assessment in January 2013 showed that the predecessor school's good performance had been sustained.

This school continues to be good.

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

You are passionate about the care and quality of education that pupils experience under your leadership. You want the best for each child academically, socially and personally. You communicate these aspirations to staff, governors, parents and pupils effectively. As a result, a distinctive sense of cooperation and partnership exists across the school and beyond: a team working together towards joint goals. Staff agree, saying, 'this is a strong community' striving for 'the best outcomes for our pupils'. One parent's view captured the view of many: 'Normanby always has the children's best interests at heart.' A positive and harmonious school ethos is tangible.

In June 2014, the school converted to become an academy and is now part of the Ironstone Academy Trust. Leaders, managers and staff benefit from working collaboratively with other schools in the trust, regularly sharing best value principles and good practices with diligence. Records demonstrate that governors and trustees challenge and support leaders conscientiously. At times, though, issues could be probed more comprehensively to ensure that all parties fully understand the finer details of the school's performance. This is particularly crucial regarding the use and impact of additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their different starting points. Additional funding received by the school for managing the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is used wisely. Leaders keep a careful watch on how well individuals are doing over time. The special educational needs information report on the website does not include all required information as set out in the 2015 code of practice. This potentially limits parents' and carers' understanding of what precisely is offered by the school.

The large majority of pupils and parents agree that Normanby Primary is a safe, happy and exciting school. Staff are proud to work in a school that they believe is well led and managed. Staff agree that the 'children are fantastic' and 'enjoy coming to school every day'. Pupils' good attendance is testament to this. Attendance overall remains above national averages and the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent is low and reducing. Pupils say that teachers make learning fun and that behaviour in lessons and outside is nearly always excellent. Pupils' conduct is praiseworthy: they are unfailingly polite, treating each other and adults with respect. Pupils are confident that adults in the school will listen to any concerns they may have. Although a small minority of parents raised concerns about bullying, records demonstrate that any instances of bullying or poor behaviour are dealt with promptly and fairly. Recent changes in the way that staff document and analyse incidents have ensured that any patterns or repeated poor behaviours are identified and addressed swiftly.

The previous inspection report challenged you to increase further the proportion of teaching that is good or better. You have done so successfully. Consequently, pupils make good progress from their different starting points in most subjects.

Recommendations from the report also induced you to accelerate the progress of the most able pupils and make sure that the level of challenge in lessons is consistently high. Historically, key stage 2 outcomes remained significantly above the national average in all subjects over time: clear evidence of pupils' response to challenge. However, some aspects of pupils' outcomes in 2016 disappointed you. For example, the proportion of pupils reaching a greater depth of learning in writing in key stage 2 and in reading in key stage 1 were lower than national averages. Differences between pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, also persisted for some pupils in some areas. You and your team are tackling the correct priorities with vigour. Initiatives like the 'chilli challenges' and targeted intervention work are helping to raise current pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Judicious use of the pupil premium and special educational needs funding is leading to a reduction in differences. Scope remains, however, to further challenge some pupils and you are rightly mindful that providing effective challenge for all groups of pupils remains a priority.

Subjects are couched within a motivating curriculum. The wide variety of enriching activities are highly valued by pupils. Enjoyable clubs, exciting trips, interesting visits and visitors, and some tantalising projects colour pupils' experiences, giving

them lifelong memories and stimulating ambition. Science, for example, has been woven through topic-based learning. Pupils recently designed and built an impressive racing car, explored and classified materials in the outdoor school environment, and cultivated flowers and herbs. Such endeavours are contributing to an improving picture in terms of outcomes for pupils. You agree that the teaching, learning and assessment of science would benefit further from being central to improvement planning.

Safeguarding is effective.

The safety and well-being of pupils take priority and are central to school-wide practices. Welfare requirements are met, including those arrangements particular to the care of two-year-olds. An early help practitioner, pupil premium champion and experienced special educational needs coordinator work closely with all staff to ensure that vulnerable families' and pupils' needs are managed effectively. Your stated intention is that 'no child should be disadvantaged'. Work with parents, outside agencies and specialists augments your work to minimise risk for pupils and reduce barriers to learning. Some parents' views captured the essence of this aspect of the school's work effectively: 'The emotional well-being of pupils is clearly as important as their academic progress', and 'Staff provide a very good learning environment that nurtures and cares for all children.'

The site is safe, secure and well maintained. Staff have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of how to keep children free from harm because safeguarding and child protection training take place at regular intervals. The suitability of all adults working with children, including visitors and volunteers, is checked carefully. Leaders are trained to manage recruitment safely. These measures are effective in helping to protect children from harm.

Inspection findings

- You consult closely with trustees, governors and staff to make sure that improvement planning is focused on the correct priorities. You have embedded strong systems for monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and built effective means of supporting and challenging staff to improve their performance. There is a consistent focus on improving pupils' outcomes. Governors' understanding of the extent to which additional funding benefits some groups, particularly those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, could be further strengthened.
- Pupils are happy and well cared for. Swift action is taken when accidents or incidents occur, ensuring that injured parties' needs are met effectively. Records are detailed and regularly analysed to ensure that lessons can be learned from any repeated incidents or patterns. Attendance, for example for disadvantaged pupils who were regularly absent from school, is improving as a result of your actions. Pupils' welfare needs are met effectively.
- Adults have positive and enabling relationships with children across the early years foundation stage and children make good progress from their different starting points. Two-year-olds learn to take managed risks as they negotiate the

grassy hill in the outdoor area and learn to use cutlery safely. They are encouraged to mix with other children in the early years, learning from their older peers more mature skills and positive role modelling. Links with parents are strong and a majority of parents say that 'the staff are very friendly... always willing to listen to concerns and always willing to help'.

- Pupils' outcomes this year are favourable, showing clear improvement across subjects and ability groups in both key stage 1 and key stage 2. Pupils' work in books and their good progress in lessons testify to this. Pupils who read with inspectors demonstrated effective skills of decoding and good levels of understanding. You and your leadership team have worked with trust partners to ensure that assessment procedures have strengthened. Regular moderation takes place across the partnership schools. This has enabled you to develop a more rigorous and reliable means of measuring pupils' progress and achievement. At times, however, work for some pupils in some subjects is too easy or repetitive. There is room to challenge some individuals further, including, but not solely, the most able.
- Disadvantaged pupils historically have made good progress from their different starting points. In 2016, however, differences between some disadvantaged pupils and their peers widened. The current group of disadvantaged pupils are benefiting from the measures that have been put in place following leaders' rigorous analyses of the 2016 outcomes. Carefully targeted initiatives are successfully reducing differences across subjects in both key stage 1 and key stage 2. In keeping with other inspection findings, some of the most able disadvantaged pupils have the potential to be further challenged.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early because of the thorough systems in place. Quality first teaching, positive professional development, links with external and in-house specialist expertise and thorough tracking systems enable you and your special educational needs coordinator to respond quickly where issues arise. Any interventions are considered carefully to make sure that pupils' needs are being met effectively. Consequently, most pupils are making good progress from their starting points across the curriculum. Some information in the special educational needs report on the website needs updating.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- all governors and trustees have a deep and detailed understanding of the use and impact of additional funding
- teaching, learning and assessment in science are central to improvement planning and focused clearly on improving pupils' outcomes and opportunities in science
- pupils, including the most able and the most able disadvantaged, are sufficiently and consistently challenged across subjects

- the special educational needs information report is fully compliant with the code of practice requirements.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona Manuel
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, a group of governors including the chair of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, a partner from the Ironstone Academy Trust and subject leaders. Inspectors conducted observations of teaching and learning across year groups and looked at pupils' work in books and during lessons. You and I observed teaching and learning jointly. I examined a range of documentation including policies, the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plans as well as behaviour and safeguarding information. I took account of 33 free-text messages from parents and 34 parental responses on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also paid attention to 27 survey responses from staff. No pupils responded to the survey but inspectors spoke formally and informally with pupils and listened to pupils reading.