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Mrs Beverly Naylor
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Naylor

Short inspection of Cumberland Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 18 July 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 January 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 team have continued to provide excellent care for your pupils' well-being. This is appreciated by pupils and highly valued by parents. Your personal commitment to the pupils, parents and staff has made a significant contribution to the success of the school. You have a deep knowledge of the pupils, the staff and the curriculum. You use this very effectively to get the best out of each of them.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and agree that their children are safe, happy and well looked after. Parents' views were summed up by one who described Cumberland as 'a truly wonderful school'. As a result of the care and support they receive, pupils are confident learners who demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. This was evident in the pupils' engagement in the dance and sports activities seen during the inspection. It can also be seen in the work pupils completed during the year.

The school is characterised by the commitment of you and your team to get things right for your pupils. Alongside governors and other leaders, you have taken effective action to maintain and build on the strengths identified in the last inspection. Together, you have addressed the recommendations to improve the quality of teaching and develop the role of middle leaders. As a result, outcomes for pupils remain good. In the Reception class, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils achieve levels that are at least in line with national averages and sometimes better than this. In

addition, an increasing number of pupils are now making more than expected progress. As we discussed, it is important that you continue to focus on enabling all pupils to make above-average progress so that more of them can achieve the higher levels.

You have successfully developed the role of middle leaders since the last inspection. You now work together as a highly effective team. Consequently, they now play a very significant role in the success of the school. A good example of this is the time spent improving the assessment of what pupils know and can do. This showed your teamwork and commitment to getting things right for the pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school cares deeply for the well-being of every child. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. With other senior leaders, you closely monitor and follow up all concerns raised by staff. You have access to regular local updates and work closely with other agencies.

Pupils feel safe in the school and parents are confident that staff take very good care of their children. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education and have an appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are happy at school and understand the importance of regular attendance. They would recommend the school to other children.

Through regular updates and meetings, you ensure that all staff maintain a high level of care for the pupils. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of the pupils in their care. Staff go to great lengths to ensure that pupils are well cared for. The staff are proud to work in the school and feel that leaders are considerate of their well-being.

Governors have a good understanding of what the school does to keep pupils safe. They have recently improved the way that they monitor the school's effectiveness. A number of governors now visit to look at one aspect of the school. The most recent visit was to look at behaviour and safety. During this visit, governors watched a successful fire drill, showing them that staff follow agreed procedures well. These visits are giving governors an excellent understanding of how effectively policies are put into practice in the school. We agreed that governors must continue with these visits to check on other important aspects of the school.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at the following aspects of the school's work:
 - the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements
 - how well leaders have improved the quality of teaching and middle leadership
 - leaders' success in making sure that disadvantaged pupils do as well as other pupils

- how successfully the school promotes good attendance for all pupils.
- You know your pupils well and are ambitious for each of them. With your team, you make sure pupils receive individual attention and effective teaching. As a result, pupils make good progress from their starting points. In each year group, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics is at least in line with national averages. In many places it is better than this. The number of pupils who achieve the higher levels is equally strong and is improving. However, the school does not just focus on English and mathematics. You are keen to offer a good, wide curriculum that interests the pupils. An example of the value you place on the wider curriculum is evident in the recent work to improve the teaching of science. Pupils have enjoyed this work and their achievement has improved.
- You quickly address areas of teaching that need to improve. A good example of this is the work to improve the teaching of phonics. The changes have resulted in pupils developing more secure knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make. This has resulted in more pupils achieving the expected level in Year 1. This new approach includes action to strengthen speaking and listening skills in the school. Together, these changes are improving pupils' writing.
- The governing body has maintained its effectiveness and sought to improve since the last inspection. Governors' drive to be as good as they can be has resulted in driven, continual reflection and improvement of the challenge and support they give the school. Governors have carried out a self-review to evaluate and improve their own performance. As a result, they have made their meetings more efficient and introduced a new approach to monitoring, reported earlier in this letter. Consequently, governors continue to rigorously hold school leaders to account for the outcomes pupils achieve.
- The last inspection identified that some middle leaders were more effective than others. Since then you have provided all middle leaders with training and support; as a result, you now have a very strong and effective team. The strength of your leadership can be seen in the improvements made since the last inspection. Successes with science, phonics and the quality of teaching have come from a strong team who are well led.
- Pupil premium funding is well used. Leaders make sure that the small number of disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their low starting points. As a result of the improvements to teaching, an increasing number of disadvantaged pupils make better than expected progress. These improvements are most obvious in reading and mathematics. Results in writing are not yet as strong. However, developments to the teaching of phonics have significantly increased the number of disadvantaged pupils who reach the expected level in Year 1. The impact of this is beginning to be seen in pupils' writing. As we discussed, it is important that these improvements continue so that more disadvantaged pupils are able to make greater progress in all areas.
- Good attendance is celebrated in the school. Pupils know how important it is to attend school every day and not to be late. Leaders are diligent in their efforts to ensure that all pupils attend regularly. Consequently, rates of attendance are higher than the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they increase the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who make more than expected progress
- more pupils make faster progress so that they can reach the higher levels
- the governing body knows how effectively key policies are put into practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Minns
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection I held meetings with you and members of your leadership team to discuss a range of issues including safeguarding, pupils' progress and attendance. Together, you and I carried out visits to classrooms and looked at pupils' work. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and talked to children at breaktime and during their lessons. I met with three members of the governing body and had a phone conversation with a representative from Portsmouth local authority. I reviewed school documentation, including the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding. I took account of 56 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 46 written comments. I considered 10 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 41 responses to the pupil survey. I also considered one beautifully written letter from a child in Reception.