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Mrs Andrea English
Executive Headteacher
Evergreen Primary School
Warwick Road
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Dear Mrs English

Short inspection of Evergreen Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 September 2017 with Fiona Dixon, HMI, 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. Since then, the school has become part of a federation of two schools, with a head of each school, a joint governing body and with one executive headteacher. You became executive headteacher in 2015, following a period in which you provided additional support to the school. You, together with the head of school, form an effective team and provide strong and confident leadership which is respected by staff and parents. As a result, your staff are proud to work at the school. You, your staff and governors have ensured that the school's strengths in behaviour, the quality of teaching in early years and key stage 1, and the curriculum have been maintained and built upon since the last inspection.

Pupils like their school and their delight in learning is evident in early years classes and all key stages. In lessons, pupils keep to task and work hard to meet the high expectations that staff have of them. They told us that the school is helping them learn and there are lots of fun things to do. Pupils in key stage 2 are proud of mastering reading skills and earning rewards for their good work and behaviour. Behaviour around school, in the play areas and dining room is equally strong due to clear and well-established routines. Staff are highly skilled in supporting pupils' individual needs. At lunchtime, kitchen staff help pupils to make their meal choices and those who need specialist help with feeding receive it from specially trained care assistants.

Parents who spoke with inspectors or who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, are overwhelmingly positive about the education and care that their children

receive. They are pleased with the changes in their children and respect the skills and professionalism of you and your staff that have helped to bring this about. One parent wrote, 'This school is a sea of calm every time you step through the door. They make dealing with difficult behaviour look effortless.' Parents also welcome the increasing opportunities you have introduced to support their children's learning through 'Wow days', visits and activities.

Governors are well informed about the work of the school and have strengthened this aspect of their role following federation. They receive detailed information and take steps through their link roles and visits to see at first hand the impact the school has on pupils. Governors are supportive and challenging in equal measure. They undertake their duties conscientiously and their professional skills are well aligned to their designated roles such as safeguarding or links to early years classes.

Safeguarding is effective.

A culture of safeguarding is established across the school. Leaders and governors ensure through their checks that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Procedures and recruitment checks on the suitability of staff are embedded and followed. Staff understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe. Regular training on safeguarding and supporting pupils' medical, health and personal care needs ensures a consistent approach across the school. Monthly checks of medication and its administration take place to underpin this reliability. Strong links with a large number of external agencies are established. Records show that referrals are made promptly and followed through. Pupils with behavioural needs, who may be a risk to themselves and others, are quickly and well supported through care plans that are tailored to their needs. They are regularly reviewed and updated as these needs change. The plans are effective and reviews show a steady reduction in behavioural incidents.

You make sure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils who talked with an inspector confidently explained some of the potential dangers and how to stay safe when using the internet. Parents are very positive about how well their children are looked after. They value the care their children receive, including those with life-limiting conditions. Pupils feel safe and say that if they are upset or unwell, they tell any adult, knowing they will take care of them. Pupils say their toys are safe and are aware that the school takes such steps to care for them.

Inspection findings

- Since the last inspection you have implemented a new curriculum and approach to delivering the curriculum. You are rightly proud of this work and we agreed that a key line of enquiry would be to investigate the impact it has on pupils' progress.
- Together with your staff, you are making learning exciting and active. You have placed an emphasis on providing opportunities for pupils to come together to work on projects that include many different subjects and skills. These are known

throughout the school as 'Wow days'. Other developments have brought greater opportunities for pupils to continue their learning through play.

- You have brought staff and governors together to ensure that the changes you have introduced have been well planned, resourced and explained to pupils and parents.
- The changes that you have made to the curriculum have, in a short time, brought about improvements in pupils' attitudes to learning, developed their social and emotional skills, and contributed to increasing achievement in all subjects.
- There is scope to develop the curriculum even further. Checks on pupils' work during this inspection found that pupils who are most able currently do not have opportunities to progress in their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Another of my key lines of enquiry was to find out how you had tackled the recommendations made at the time of the school's last inspection. Your reorganisation of classes, so that pupils are taught in specialist groups, has helped teachers to know and support each child better. This change has resulted in a much stronger match between the expertise that teachers have and their understanding of the specialist needs of the pupils in their classes.
- Our classroom visits found the school to be a calm and happy place, where pupils are developing into confident and enthusiastic learners. Teaching and support staff work together well and have a clear understanding of the welfare, social and academic needs of the pupils in their class. Activities in numeracy, reading, writing and communication are well pitched to pupils' interests and sustain concentration.
- Changes to the way literacy and numeracy are taught throughout the school have helped to improve the quality and consistency of teaching. This has ensured that expectations progressively increase in reading, writing and mathematics as pupils move through the school.
- As a result of the good-quality training and support provided to teachers, they are confidently using a wide range of strategies and resources to ensure that activities and tasks are better aligned to pupils' needs. For example, in early years classes and in all key stages, the teaching of signing and communication through picture, language, switches and other aids is enabling children with no verbal communication to interact, share their feelings and wishes, and take part in activities that meet their needs.
- Although inspectors saw many examples of staff skilfully adapting tasks to promote swifter progress, some activities could move pupils on more quickly to develop learning further. Opportunities are provided for most-able pupils to write independently, however, this work is not always built upon and developed enough to extend their skills.
- A final area that I explored was how the school identifies the progress that pupils make in their learning. Systems to establish pupils' starting points are embedded across the school. Evidence seen in the early years classes, and as pupils join the school in other year groups, demonstrates a consistent approach to identifying

what pupils can do.

- School data shows a trend of improving progress in reading, writing and mathematics for all groups of pupils from their starting points. School information also shows that all pupils in the school have made better progress in every subject since the new curriculum was introduced 12 months ago.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic and keen to develop their roles. They told us they feel well supported to take their ideas and initiatives forward. Systems are in place to enable them to check the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms and books to assess pupils' progress in the wider curriculum. However, not all subject leaders are using this information to best effect to identify where improvements are needed to deepen pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. You are aware of the variability in the development plans that they produce and are starting to formulate ideas about how to tackle the issue.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- gaps in the curriculum are filled so that most-able pupils have opportunities to develop and progress in mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills
- subject leaders further develop their roles in improving pupils' achievement through better use of the information they gather to identify where pupils' learning and progress are best and where improvements are needed.

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

Yours sincerely

Gina White

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you, the head of school and other senior and middle leaders, and a group of pupils. We also met with a group of governors including the chair of the governing body. Discussions were held with a representative from the local authority. Inspectors visited classes to look at the impact of your work to develop the quality of teaching. We talked to pupils, looked at books and saw examples of teaching and learning across the school. You shared your evaluation of the school and information about the progress pupils are making. We looked at school documents relating to safeguarding and the welfare and care of pupils. We looked at the work, assessments and reports of a range of pupils to see how they are supported and the difference the school is making to their learning and achievement. Parents' views were gathered through the 31 responses to the online

survey. Inspectors also met with two parents at the start of the day. The views of staff were gathered through the inspection survey.