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Mrs Alison Wilson
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Dear Mrs Wilson

Short inspection of Northfold Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 September 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has fully addressed all the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection and maintained the good quality of education in the school.

Every group I spoke to, whether they were parents, pupils or staff, said the most important feature of the school was its sense of family. You and the governing body have created a school ethos that ensures that everyone is welcomed and valued. Consequently, pupils flourish, feel very well cared for and are happy.

Since you became headteacher 13 years ago, there have been very few staff changes. Many staff have worked in the school for some time. You and all staff have maintained a passion to provide the best for pupils of Northfold Community Primary School. It is clear that all staff work hard and give of their very best. The start of this year saw adjustments to the responsibilities of some key members of staff. These included the appointment of a leader with the task of driving up the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. This group has not been achieving as well as other pupils in the school. On the retirement of the previous post holder, the governing body also appointed a new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) who took up her post at the start of September.

In class, pupils are diligent and conscientious. They are cooperative when working in groups and always strive to help each other. During break- and lunchtimes, pupils are encouraged to let off steam and they relish this. There are games in every corner of the playground. Pupils form social groups easily. They take full advantage

of the school's play equipment. Despite the playground buzz, pupils really care for each other. If someone has a fall, there is immediately a huddle of pupils offering support. Older pupils play with younger. No one is left on their own. It is clear that pupils love coming to this school. One boy described it as, 'a great school'. Unsurprisingly, pupils attend very well. They feel safe and well looked after, and are happy and enjoy their learning.

You and other school leaders have a very accurate view on the strengths of the school and aspects that are not as strong. You recognise that the outdoor area in Reception needs some refurbishment. After careful analysis of information on how well pupils achieve, you identified that boys' writing skills are often weaker than those of girls. It is also apparent that some pupils give up too easily when their work gets difficult.

Safeguarding is effective.

School governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Pupils know that staff are dedicated to ensuring that they are safe. Consequently, pupils rightly trust adults in the school to listen to their concerns and respond appropriately. You ensure that all staff are trained well in safeguarding procedures. You and other senior staff have good working relationships with external agencies who have responsibility for protecting children. This enables you to ensure that all adults responsible for ensuring that children are safe fulfil their obligations.

Inspection findings

- Over many years, pupils have left Northfold Community Primary School fully prepared for their secondary school education. They have achieved well and so have a good grounding in a wide range of subjects. They have excellent attitudes to their learning, behave well and live by a set of high moral standards.
- There is some inconsistency in the attainment of pupils. This is due to variability in their starting points. However, most make at least good progress through their time in the school.
- Since the last inspection, you have ensured that the progress pupils make in mathematics has improved. You achieved this in typical fashion. You and your staff made a careful analysis of the situation to identify precisely what needed to improve. You considered the views of pupils. You listened to school staff and consulted more widely. You then implemented well-considered strategies. These included short intensive teaching sessions for small groups of pupils. These groups consisted of pupils of the same ability rather than the same age. You introduced girl-only small groups which enabled girls to improve their confidence in expressing their mathematical ideas. You invested heavily in staff training and resources. You provided workshop sessions for parents who wanted to help their children with mathematics. Overall, the progress that pupils make in mathematics is now strong.
- You identified some inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the assessment of

children in Reception and throughout key stage 1. You improved this through providing good-quality training and effective moderation of teachers' judgements. The assessments that teachers now make in these stages are accurate and provide reliable information on how well pupils have learned and what they need to learn next.

- Your typically careful analysis of the progress pupils currently make has accurately identified that some groups do not progress as well as others. Some disadvantaged pupils do not progress as quickly as their counterparts. Boys do not achieve as well as girls do in writing. You are using the same model for improving these aspects of achievement as you used so successfully to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics. You have already started to implement changes which are showing early signs of improvement.
- Children are very successful in developing good phonics skills in Reception and in key stage 1. This provides all pupils with a strong foundation from which they develop good standards in reading.
- Despite recent and significant changes to the curriculum for all primary schools, you have managed to maintain good standards throughout all subjects. Pupils learn how to think scientifically as well as develop scientific knowledge. Pupils develop a broad understanding of their world and culture. They develop a similarly strong understanding of other people's lives too, through learning in a wide variety of subjects and topic work. Pupils experience good practical learning through design and technology, art and computer studies.
- You have skilfully developed the role of teaching assistants by understanding their individual strengths and building on these. Now, teaching assistants have much more responsibility and enjoy their roles. They feel valued and they make a significant contribution to improving the life chances of pupils. You have similarly developed the role of the school's learning mentor who makes a considerable difference for some pupils. Included in the extensive range of the learning mentor's responsibilities, she ensures that pupils attend well. The learning mentor also gives guidance to parents on how to help their child do better at school.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been a strength of the school for many years and they too have made good progress. The SENCo has accurately identified the needs of these pupils and teachers and given good advice on how to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You are providing good support for the school's new SENCo to help her adapt quickly to her new role.
- You consult widely on how well the school is performing. Your analysis of these consultations makes a major contribution to the smooth running of the school and its improvement. You use a range of very effective strategies, from questionnaires for junior-aged pupils and parental surveys, to meeting and greeting parents every morning. Parents say that they appreciate the ease with which they can talk to you. This helps the school address small problems before they become big ones.
- Northfold Community Primary School is oversubscribed and has a waiting list because it is, under your leadership, constantly improving and a happy and

harmonious community. You, very skilfully, help staff develop their talents. The school leadership team, including governors, has considerable capacity to enable further school improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they continue to improve achievement by:

- eliminating the barriers disadvantaged pupils have that prevent them progressing as well as other pupils in the school
- improving boys' ability to communicate well, particularly through writing
- developing pupils' confidence so that they are more able to persevere with difficult challenges
- improving the Reception outdoor area so that it is as interesting and stimulating as the indoor environment.

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

Yours sincerely

Neil Mackenzie
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I worked with you throughout the day. We discussed many aspects of your school, visited classes and scrutinised pupils' work. I met with four members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority. I spoke with groups of pupils during their lunchtime. I scrutinised school documents, including safeguarding checks, information about pupils' achievement and records of checks on the quality of teaching. I examined child protection information. I took account of the responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. I considered the views of parents who texted me their comments and met with parents as they brought their children to school. I considered the views of pupils who took part in a recent school survey.