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Mr Nigel Walter  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Walter

### **Short inspection of Yearsley Grove Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 5 October 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 June 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 began your role as headteacher in September 2017. You are ambitious for the school and have identified how to make more rapid improvements to build on the successes already achieved. Staff feel valued and welcome the greater rigour in accountability you have introduced as they are keen to do the best job they can so that pupils' outcomes continue to improve.

At the last inspection, leaders were tasked with making more effective use of data. Leaders have since developed their ability to use data more precisely. More accurate and reliable assessment is supporting leaders and teachers in identifying any barriers to pupils' learning. Subject leaders adjust the teaching approaches used and have sourced additional training so that teachers have better subject knowledge.

A further area for improvement was to improve the quality of teaching. Pupils say they love learning and that teachers make it interesting for them by making meaningful links between subjects. They particularly enjoy reading and were keen to show me the well-stocked library. They welcome the greater challenge they now receive and talk about how they can think more deeply and explain their understanding as a result of the new approach to teaching mathematics.

Although there have been some encouraging improvements in pupils' outcomes,

there is still work to do as standards remain generally below the national average by the end of key stage 2. Leaders acknowledge the need to sustain more rapid progress for current pupils so that a greater proportion reach and exceed the expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. Similarly, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, while improving, are also below those of other pupils nationally. Leaders are making sure that teaching is matched to pupils' starting points and addresses any gaps in their learning. Consequently, current disadvantaged pupils are beginning to make more rapid progress. Leaders are aware that this progress must be sustained so that the difference between disadvantaged pupils' attainment and that of other pupils nationally diminishes more quickly.

There are encouraging signs of improvement in the early years where, as a result of leaders' actions, children are developing well in Nursery, giving them a much more positive start to Reception. Likewise, interventions to support pupils who began Year 1 below the expected standard have resulted in rapid progress in a short period of time. Leaders are determined to build on this success so that an increasing proportion of children reach a good level of development by the end of Reception.

Governors are very clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They challenge and support appropriately so that the school continues to improve. For example, their challenge has influenced the changes made to the appraisal system so that it more rigorously holds leaders, teachers and support staff to account for improving pupils' outcomes.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

A culture of safeguarding is clearly present across the school. This is because leaders and governors take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. Safeguarding is an agenda item at every full governing body meeting, which maintains its high profile in the school. You make sure that staff receive regular training updates so that they are effective in recognising and responding to signs of concern. Leaders involve a range of other agencies when there are concerns and keep detailed written accounts of all action taken.

Pupils behave very well and say there is rarely any bullying. They feel safe and well cared for in school and parents strongly agree. Records show that leaders and teachers respond with urgency to the rare incidents of poor behaviour and bullying. The curriculum provides countless opportunities to support children in keeping safe. Consequently, pupils talk confidently about how to stay safe, for example when they are online or crossing the road.

### **Inspection findings**

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the early years has been below the national average over time. Provisional data for 2017 indicates that 58% of children achieved a good level of development.

Leaders are acutely aware of the need for more pupils to begin Year 1 with greater readiness for the demands of the key stage 1 curriculum. Leaders provide additional support for those children who did not reach a good level of development. A carefully planned programme of activities supported them with the transition to Year 1. They have made rapid progress and school assessment information, along with work in their books, confirms that 75% of the Year 1 pupils are now working at age-related expectations. Leaders have put in place actions to raise attainment in the early years. Leaders and teachers now have a secure understanding of children's starting points and are prioritising children's language development. This is supporting children in accessing all the aspects of the curriculum. Teachers effectively develop children's early reading, writing and mathematics skills through activities which are linked with a common theme and are based on children's most critical next steps. The children who have just started their Reception Year reached a more advanced stage of development by the end of their time in Nursery, similar to that found typically for children of their age. Children currently in the early years make much faster gains in their learning.

- We agreed that over time, pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 2 has generally been below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, their progress has usually been broadly in line. Leaders are taking strong action to ensure that a greater proportion of pupils reach and exceed the expected standards by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Subject leaders have accurately identified what is preventing pupils from reaching higher standards and have made adaptations to teaching and the curriculum. Teachers have raised their expectations of pupils' learning and provide pupils with more challenging work. Pupils say they enjoy challenging activities as they feel well supported because the work gradually gets more difficult. Pupils' books and work in lessons show that pupils are beginning to make faster gains in their learning which now need to be sustained.
- We also reviewed attainment in key stage 1. Provisional data in 2017 showed improvements in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' achievement was very close to the national average at the expected standard in all three subjects. The proportion who exceeded the expected standard in mathematics was in line with national figures and in reading and writing was above average. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points at the end of the early years.
- Attainment for disadvantaged pupils throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics is below that of other pupils nationally, particularly for those currently in Years 5 and 6. However, there is an improving picture emerging at all key stages. The school's assessment information and work in books and lessons confirm that the difference in attainment is diminishing over time. Leaders have used pupil premium funding effectively to provide specific interventions, for example in the early years to support children's speech and language development. Additionally, support for the children who didn't achieve a good level of development by the end of the early years has helped an increased proportion to be ready for the Year 1 curriculum. Leaders are keen to build on these successes so that progress for disadvantaged pupils continues to quicken and the difference between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally

diminishes more rapidly.

- Leaders have also prioritised the use of pupil premium funding to build strong relationships with families, particularly those facing challenging or complex circumstances. An inclusion manager, supported by a team, works effectively with a considerable number of vulnerable families and supports pupils' social and emotional issues. The team also carefully tracks pupils' behaviour and attendance which means that leaders are quick to identify any patterns or concerns and can allocate appropriate support. As a result, there has been a general improvement in behaviour throughout the school and a reduction in the number and severity of incidents of misbehaviour. Likewise, actions to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence have also had positive outcomes. Personalised and targeted support has resulted in a reduction in the number of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent. As a result of improved behaviour and attendance and pupils developing social and emotional skills, disadvantaged pupils are showing greater readiness to learn in the classroom. This is beginning to make a positive contribution to their achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- an increasing proportion of children reach a good level of development by the end of Reception
- pupils in key stages 1 and 2 continue to make faster progress so that an increasing proportion meet and exceed the expected standards by the end of each key stage in reading, writing and mathematics
- the difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally continues to diminish rapidly.

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

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and senior leaders. I also met with three members of the governing body. I evaluated documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance records, and information about safeguarding. I spoke with several parents at the start of the school day and

considered the 91 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Forty-two responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire and 27 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered. I met with a group of pupils from a range of year groups and spoke with a group of teaching staff. You and I visited several classrooms together, sometimes accompanied by the assistant headteacher, to observe teaching and learning, listen to pupils read and scrutinise pupils' work in their books.