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Mrs Ruth Ellis
Headteacher
Headlands Primary School
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Dear Mrs Ellis

Short inspection of Headlands Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 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 took up the role of headteacher just over a year ago and have inspired staff and engaged effectively with the whole-school community. You have created a team ethos where staff feel valued and supported to develop in their roles. Consequently, staff morale is high and, together, you are taking collective responsibility for pupils' progress and personal development. This is creating strong capacity for further improvement.

You and the governors are committed to developing pupils as rounded individuals who are well mannered, articulate, confident and proud to be part of Headlands Primary School. They appreciate the numerous opportunities they have to take responsibilities and make a difference to the school and wider community. Pupils are interested in their learning because the curriculum excites them. They have access to a broad range of experiences which contribute strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, pupils' behaviour is very positive, as are their attitudes to learning.

Leaders are working effectively together and are ambitious about pupils achieving success in their learning. The processes for school self-evaluation and improvement planning are effective in supporting the school's continued improvement. This has enabled leaders to successfully deal with the areas for improvement identified at the

last inspection. For example, leaders have added greater rigour to their systems for checking the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. As a result, pupils' attainment has generally been above the national average at the end of key stages 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Provisional data for 2017 indicates that attainment was strong again and showing some further improvement. Leaders have also sustained positive achievement by the end of the early years and in the Year 1 phonics screening check, with figures consistently above the national averages since the last inspection. However, leaders are fully aware that pupils could make even better progress in key stage 2 from their often above average starting points at the end of key stage 1. This would enable an above average proportion of pupils to consistently meet and exceed the expectations by the end of key stage 2.

Members of the governing body provide school leaders with effective support and challenge. They have a variety of suitable skills and expertise. Their knowledge about the school is reinforced by their regular visits, linked to each governor's area of responsibility. This supports them in checking for themselves the impact of leaders' actions to secure improvements. Governors are also keen to listen to the views of parents, pupils and staff to help them gain a thorough understanding of what is working well and how the school could improve even further.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have created a vigilant culture of safeguarding throughout the school.

Governors carry out their duties effectively and make sure that safeguarding is a high priority. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Staff are well trained and knowledgeable about how to keep pupils safe. Very thorough induction procedures ensure that all adults in school are clear about their responsibilities for safeguarding.

Pupils say they feel safe and well looked after and parents agree. Pupils have complete faith that adults in the school will listen to them if they are worried at all. They are confident that any rare issues of poor behaviour or bullying are dealt with firmly and fairly through the new behaviour policy which pupils and parents were involved in developing. The curriculum effectively develops pupils' understanding of potential dangers, such as crossing roads, riding a bicycle, bullying and using the internet. As a result, pupils talk with confidence about how to keep themselves and others safe.

Inspection findings

- Pupils quickly develop their phonics skills during the early years and key stage 1. The proportion of pupils who meet the standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been consistently above the national average over the last few years. However, leaders noticed that pupils did not always transfer their phonics knowledge as successfully when attempting to spell unfamiliar words.

Consequently, spelling became a barrier to some pupils' writing progress as they moved through key stages 1 and 2. Leaders took prompt action and introduced a range of strategies to support pupils' spelling development. For example, phonics teaching now includes daily opportunities for pupils to practise spelling. Teachers throughout the school now also give pupils greater responsibility for checking their own work and using resources, such as dictionaries, to correct any misspelt words. As a result of the approaches you have implemented, pupils show confidence in spotting errors and making corrections for themselves.

- In 2016, pupils' attainment in writing at the end of key stage 2 was only in line with the national average. This is in contrast to attainment in reading and mathematics which were both above the national average at the expected standard. Leaders took action to address this relative weakness. Leaders have made sure that writing has a high profile throughout the school and that teachers have increased their subject knowledge to enable them to have the highest expectations of pupils' written work. Pupils particularly enjoy the writing topics they study. They work enthusiastically, generating ideas and refining their written work, supported well by a range of resources which develop their independence. They also take care in the presentation of their work and high-quality examples of their writing are proudly displayed around the building. As a result of leaders' actions, current pupils are making better progress in writing. You are keen for pupils to sustain this more rapid progress so that an increasing proportion of them meet and exceed the expectations for writing by the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils' achievement is strong in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1. Pupils go on to make progress which is usually broadly in line with that seen nationally by the end of key stage 2. Leaders are keen to accelerate pupils' progress further so that a greater proportion reach and exceed the expected standards by the end of key stage 2. Leaders and teachers work together to set aspirational targets for pupils, make checks on the progress pupils are making, and identify actions to support pupils who need to catch up with their learning. You have made sure that teachers have a good understanding of the curriculum they teach. Teachers' clear expectations about how to produce work of high quality is helping pupils to make more rapid gains in their learning. The effective use of resources to support pupils' independence results in pupils knowing how to check and improve their work and is building their confidence and resilience as learners. You are also making sure that meaningful links between subjects support pupils in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.
- Pupils' high attendance, which is well above the national average overall, is testament to pupils' enjoyment of school and the value they see in their education. Leaders' tracking of attendance and follow-up actions have resulted in improved attendance for disadvantaged pupils over time.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress continues to quicken in key stage 2 so that an increasing proportion of pupils meet and exceed the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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 97 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. 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 every classroom together, sometimes accompanied by the deputy headteacher, to observe teaching and learning, to listen to pupils read and to scrutinise pupils' work in their books.