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Mrs Zoe Ryan  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Ryan

### **Short inspection of Branton Community Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 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 March 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 have successfully preserved the warm, welcoming atmosphere of this small school which sits at the heart of its community. Good quality teaching and learning have been sustained effectively. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school each day and appreciate the broad range of opportunities provided by the varied curriculum that you have embedded. The large majority of parents and carers agree that their children flourish within the positive culture that you have established.

You accurately identified the school's strengths and priorities and have developed appropriate actions in the school development plan. You recognise that some of the actions you list in the plan could be more precise so that governors can keep a closer check on the effect of your work on outcomes for pupils.

You have successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Teaching is now far more consistent; pupils' progress and attainment have improved, especially in key stage 1. Most pupils are now making strong progress. Teachers use questioning well and the pace of learning secures pupils' concentration in lessons. Pupils respond well to the additional tasks and challenges provided. These extend their knowledge and help them progress well. Teachers'

feedback to pupils, in line with the school's policy, clearly indicates how their work can be improved and this helps deepen their understanding effectively. Pupils have a strong work ethic and show high levels of independence and cooperation in lessons. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use technical vocabulary to support pupils' learning well.

Teachers know each pupil very well and adapt their teaching skilfully to meet pupils' individual needs. This is exemplified by the good work you do to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Thorough planning, in consultation with parents, has ensured that pupils' needs are well met, allowing them to thrive and make good progress from their starting points. It is noticeable how kind and caring pupils are to one another.

Governors have a good understanding of how well the school is doing. They come from a wide range of backgrounds and use their experience well to ask challenging and pertinent questions of leaders. Effective systems and procedures are in place that allow governors to read reports in good time prior to their meetings. This helps them formulate the important questions they wish to ask leaders. Governors agree that they need to keep a closer eye on how well pupils are progressing across the wider curriculum, as well as making sure that the school's plans clearly state how opportunities will be provided to further challenge the most able pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You undertake effectively the role of the designated safeguarding leader. Policies, procedures and records are of high quality and are up to date. Summary records of incidents of concern are meticulously kept. There are very few records of behaviour incidents or alleged bullying, and pupils spoken with categorically state that no bullying happens at Branton Community Primary School. All staff receive appropriate training and have a secure understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding pupils.

Pupils enjoy school and attendance is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after. They have complete faith that adults in school will listen to them if they are worried or would like to talk. They are confident that any rare issues of poor behaviour or mishaps in the playground will be dealt with fairly and firmly. Pupils' attitudes and behaviours in lessons and during informal times are indicative of the strength of the school's work in this area. Relationships between adults and pupils are supportive and positive.

The culture of keeping pupils safe and putting them at the heart of the friendly school community is highly evident. The personal development and welfare of all pupils is a main area of focus for the school. The vast majority of parents who made their views known report that their children are safe in school.

## Inspection findings

- You are ambitious for all pupils at the school. Staff know pupils as individuals. This prompts close attention to the needs and capabilities of each child and leads to highly positive relationships between staff and pupils.
- Governors are skilled in their roles and know the journey that the school is on and the actions taken to reach this point. They are very well informed, take nothing at face value, question and challenge very effectively, and are fully engaged in putting into place key actions to move the school forward even more rapidly. They know that development plans need to provide more precise measures to check the impact of leaders' actions to heighten pupils' progress, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Children get off to a fast start in their learning in the early years. Nursery and Reception children play and learn happily alongside each other, sticking at tasks and maintaining their concentration. Adults support children's learning well. They use effective questioning and provide a range of activities to support children's writing and understanding of numbers. Reception children happily take turns and include the two-year-olds in their play.
- Pupils get off to a good start in their reading. The systematic teaching of phonics starts in Reception, and continues into key stage 1. Some pupils read fluently to the inspector during visits to classes. Pupils read widely and often, and are developing a love of reading. Pupils in key stage 2 are beginning to develop skills of inference and deduction when reading.
- Teachers' ongoing assessments and monitoring of pupils' successes or misunderstandings in their work allow planned activities to be amended or changed. You are addressing the need for teachers to stretch the most able pupils more thoroughly in areas such as mathematics and writing, although these pupils are still not consistently challenged.
- Adults support children's learning well. They use effective questioning and provide a range of activities to support children's learning. There are many opportunities to explore and extend learning in the very well developed outdoor environment. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is now approaching the national average.
- Pupils are attentive in lessons and have largely excellent attitudes to learning. Relationships are strong. Pupils know how well they have done in their learning and the next steps they need to take to do even better. Pupils value the feedback that they get from the teachers.
- The forest school further enhances outdoor learning opportunities for the children and broadens the curriculum exceptionally well. Children were observed working together making round houses as part of their topic on the Bronze and Iron Age.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an unmistakable strength of the school. Pupils' behaviour and conduct during lessons and outside at playtimes are good. Pupils behave respectfully and with consideration for others.

- The pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent well. The amount of progress that disadvantaged pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics across most year groups is similar to that of all other pupils.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers' expectations of pupils remain consistently high and that work challenges and stretches the most able pupils' thinking and understanding, especially in mathematics and writing
- the actions in the school development plan are improved on, so that they are more precise and enable governors to check carefully the impact of the leaders' work on pupils' outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Seagrove  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you to discuss the effectiveness of the school and its leadership and management. I visited all classes and observed pupils' learning with you. I met with the chair and other members of the governing body. I spoke to pupils about their work and their views of the school, both in lessons and in meetings. I listened to some pupils read. I considered the views of parents from the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. A range of documents were considered relating to safeguarding, performance management, governors' meetings, and external evaluations of the school. I also analysed the school's development plan and self-evaluation, the curriculum and tracking of current pupils' progress. I also scrutinised pupils' recent achievement in statutory assessments.