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Mrs Joanne Shaw
Headteacher
Catchgate Primary School
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Dear Mrs Shaw

Short inspection of Catchgate Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 November 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

Since the last inspection, you have provided dedicated and insightful leadership that has secured the continued development of the school. Along with your other leaders and governors, you have accurately identified the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. The school's detailed self-evaluation documentation and improvement plans clearly identify the priorities for improving the school further. The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You, your staff and governors have created a welcoming, friendly and inclusive school. Your pupils told me that some of the best things about your school are that pupils are encouraged to 'do their very best' and that teachers and staff help them 'every step of the way'. You have high expectations for pupils' achievement and strive to ensure that pupils learn well across the curriculum. As a result, pupils' confidence and self-esteem develops and they make good progress academically. In lessons, pupils work hard and engage well with their learning. This is because your staff plan learning to match pupils' needs and interests. The positive caring relationship between staff and pupils and pupils with their peers generates a supportive and purposeful learning environment.

Leaders, staff and governors have successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. They have also maintained the previously

identified strengths.

The first area to tackle in the previous inspection report was to further improve some of the teaching. You and your leaders check the quality of teaching regularly using a range of approaches. This ensures that you have an accurate view of the quality of teaching across the school. You promptly put in place training for all staff when you identify an area that needs developing. For example, the training provided by the deputy headteacher, supported by the local authority, has improved the teaching of mathematics and developed pupils' mathematical problem-solving and reasoning skills. Consequently, pupils are making good progress in this subject. In 2017, the proportions of pupils who achieved the expected standard in mathematics were above the averages found nationally at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. You have recently developed your approach to the teaching of reading and writing. While there are early signs that this approach is further improving pupils' learning in these areas, you recognise that this approach is not fully embedded.

The second area to address was to improve the impact of the school's leaders including the governors. You and your leaders have ensured the continued development of the school. There is a drive and ambition from all leaders, including governors, to continually improve pupils' outcomes and support their personal development and welfare. Governors have audited their skills and taken steps to address areas for development. Link governor roles, such as for English, for safeguarding or for provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, enable governors to keep a close eye on school developments in a very practical way. Your staff are supportive of the way the school is led and managed and how leaders use professional development to encourage, challenge and support teachers' improvement.

The provision for pupils' personal development and welfare is a key strength of the school. Your curriculum and the extensive opportunities for responsible roles within school and beyond ensure that pupils develop citizenship skills that prepare them well for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils were keen to tell me about how their roles as playground friends, mini police and members of the school council helped to support other pupils and to influence the development of your school. Support and guidance is provided for pupils who need additional nurture to enable them to succeed. This helps those pupils and their families who may be vulnerable, to receive appropriate provision from your staff or other agencies.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your staff and governors give the highest priority to keeping pupils safe and there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders and governors have ensured that current safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are of a high quality. They carry out appropriate checks for all staff, governors and volunteers. Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training so they know how to keep pupils safe, including training about how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Consequently, staff and governors

understand the safeguarding procedures and their own responsibilities. You have established additional staffing, such as the school counsellor and the attendance officer, which is particularly tailored to meet the needs of pupils and families.

Your curriculum helps pupils know how to keep themselves safe. During the inspection, I noted two-year-old children and Year 3 pupils developing their ideas about fire safety in interesting ways. Your pupils could explain to me ways to stay safe online. Pupils know the different forms that bullying can take and know that staff will help them if they ever have concerns. A small number of parents expressed their concerns about bullying. When I reviewed your systems for recording bullying, they were comprehensive. Your staff follow up reported incidents of bullying thoroughly.

Inspection findings

- You and your staff set aspirational targets for pupils' outcomes and carefully check pupils' progress towards achieving these. Gaps in learning are identified promptly and support put in place to bring pupils' progress back on track. Your current pupil progress information shows that, in the main, pupils are making good progress across your school. However, you recognise that some pupils need to accelerate their progress, particularly in reading.
- You have developed a range of approaches to improve further pupils' progress in reading and writing. The recent introduction of using interesting fiction books to inspire pupils to write is having positive effects. There is evidence of improving quality in pupils' shorter pieces of writing, although the full effect on more extended pieces is not yet as evident. Reading has a high profile around school and attractive library areas encourage pupils to read. Reading challenges are well understood by pupils who were keen to explain to me the rewards systems for regular reading. You have engaged a wide range of adults, including parents, people from local industry and shops, and members of the emergency services, to come into school to share books with pupils and model a love of reading.
- You have recently revised your assessment recording systems for reading, writing and mathematics. When we reviewed these new records, staff were in the main using them consistently. As this system is relatively new, you recognise the need to ensure that it embeds effectively and that leaders check that it provides quality information about pupils' learning and progress overtime.
- The teaching of phonics is good and staff ensure that learning meets pupils' needs effectively. Over a period of three years up to 2016, the school's results in the Year 1 phonics screening check were above the national averages. You and your staff have been prompt to address the 'dip' in results in 2017. 'Catch-up' provision is in place, where required, for pupils who are now in Year 2. Your tracking of pupils' phonics skills with current Year 1 is showing that you have restored the strong pupil progress evident in previous years.
- Pupils' attendance overall compares well to national averages. The committed approach to reducing absence levels by you and your staff is paying dividends. Careful analysis of pupils' attendance by the business manager and support for

pupils and their families is improving attendance for pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons, moving around school and at playtimes is exemplary. This is because you and your staff set high expectations and apply your behaviour policy consistently. We reviewed your approaches for recording any incidents where pupils' behaviour does not meet your expectations, including the documentation related to the small number of exclusions. These show that you and your staff provide the guidance and provision, including where relevant, support from other agencies, to enable all pupils to be successful in your school.
- The leader for early years has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the early years provision. For example, she is currently reviewing outdoor provision to develop further the opportunities for reading and writing in this area.
- Since the last inspection, you have introduced provision for two-year-olds. These children settle quickly into your school and staff work well to develop children's personal development skills and learning needs. Consequently, these children engage well with learning opportunities; show care and kindness to one another; and respond well to staff guidance, questioning and instructions.
- From their starting points, children make good progress across Nursery and Reception. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development has been similar to the national average for the last two years. Children engage well with both adult-led teaching and, when they choose, from the range of learning activities available in classrooms and outdoors.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's priorities and the community the school serves. They review carefully the impact of budget spending, including the use of additional pupil premium spending. Governors ensure that there are appropriate links between the school's performance management structures and pay progression.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the recently introduced approaches for teaching reading and writing are embedded and that they have a positive effect on pupils' progress in these subjects
- the revised assessment recording approaches enable teachers and leaders to continue to track pupils' learning effectively and to address any gaps in pupils' learning promptly.

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

Michael Reeves
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you, your deputy headteacher and your leaders for English and early years. I observed and spoke with pupils during playtime and at other times during the day. I held a meeting with a representative from the local authority. I met with eight governors, including the chair of the governing body, who were able to provide me with additional information. I took into account school documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website. I considered the 30 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View. I reviewed the 32 responses to the staff survey. I visited nine classes to observe teaching and learning; the vast majority of these I completed with you. I looked at pupils' English work to help evaluate the quality of teaching and learning over time and listened to some pupils read in class. I considered behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding.