

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



13 December 2017

Mr Andrew Davies
Headteacher
Lazonby C of E Primary School
Lazonby
Penrith
Cumbria
CA10 1BL

Dear Mr Davies

Short inspection of Lazonby C of E Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 December 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The current leadership team has responded successfully to a decline in standards and, once again, the school is providing a good quality of education.

When taking up your post as headteacher in January 2016, the quality of teaching was not good enough because teachers were not being well supported or guided. You started to address these fundamental issues quickly but there was too little time to make up ground for the Year 6 pupils who left in 2016 and their achievement in writing was significantly below that seen nationally. Their achievement in mathematics, although not as weak as it was in writing, also raised concerns.

Year 6 pupils leaving in 2017 benefited from improved teaching of writing and mathematics. Their achievement returned to broadly good.

Children have made consistently good progress throughout the early years phase. The teaching of phonics is secure and pupils' achievement in reading has always been a strength of the school. However, weak teaching in Year 2 last year meant these pupils did not attain good standards in reading, writing or mathematics.

You have successfully implemented wide-ranging reforms within the school, all of which are contributing to rapid improvement. All groups of pupils are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, including those in Year 2. The drive to improve pupils' core skills was entirely appropriate. However, this had taken

teachers' attention and time away from other subjects, most notably history and geography.

You have implemented a good system to track the progress of pupils. The quality of this information is dependent on the accuracy of the assessments that teachers make. You rightly recognise that teachers need further support and guidance to ensure that leaders can have confidence in the accuracy of this information.

Pupils are very happy in school. They work enthusiastically and have excellent attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is commendable. Older pupils willingly take on responsibilities. They naturally look after younger pupils because the culture of the school encourages all to show respect and love for one another. The school excels at promoting pupils' spiritual development, which is integral to its ethos and mission.

The local governing body accept some responsibility for the decline in teaching which led to the historical decline in standards. They believe they did not, as a group, hold the leaders or indeed themselves to account with sufficient rigour. Since you became headteacher, many new governors have joined the local governing body, which is now being well supported by the multi-academy trust. Governors say they are now much clearer about their roles and responsibilities. They have a very accurate view of their strengths and the areas where they need to improve. The local governing body is now asking much more searching questions about the quality of the school's work and so are much better informed.

Safeguarding is effective.

Systems and procedures to ensure that pupils are safe and free from harm are rigorous. The local governing body ensures that only suitable adults are engaged to become staff or act as volunteers. Access to the school building is tightly regulated. The excellent relationships between adults and pupils ensure that pupils have considerable trust in the staff. Pupils are confident in expressing concerns to staff and know they will be given excellent advice. The headteacher maintains very good relations with external agencies that also have responsibilities to ensure that children are safe.

Inspection findings

- Through your strong leadership, you have successfully improved teaching and achievement so that they are once again good for all groups of pupils currently in the school. Pupils enthuse about the new approaches to teaching mathematics. Their arithmetical skills are highly developed. Pupils are now writing at length and with confidence. All teachers are now better prepared to teach writing and mathematics. It is evident that even from September to now, pupils' fluency in writing has improved considerably. Pupils' skills in reading have been consistently good over a number of years. Pupils develop a good foundation from which they develop their reading skills and they enjoy reading. You have addressed the circumstances that led to the weak attainment of pupils in Year 2 last year. These

pupils are currently making rapid progress in Year 3. Teachers have improved the quality of their lesson planning. They are much more aware of what their pupils have learned previously and will go on to learn. Teachers now work much more collaboratively.

- Attainment in science has been consistently good and pupils' science workbooks show this is being maintained. So far this year, teachers have spent less time on developing pupils' understanding of and skills in history and geography through topic work. You have plans to address this imbalance over the next two terms.
- From stages of development on entry to the school that are typical for their age, children in the school's early years provision continue to make good progress. Staff monitor children's development closely and they know how to bring on children's learning. The early years is particularly well managed. Leaders and teachers are constantly looking to improve the provision. Parents have very good opportunities to know what their child is working on and how well they are learning. This supports a seamless approach to children's learning both at home and at school. Building work is well on its way to providing a much better outdoor learning environment for children in Nursery and Reception.
- The multi-academy trust has provided you with systems to monitor the progress of pupils. You have adopted these quickly and you are already very proficient in analysing the information. You rightly use this information merely as a guide because teachers are not yet confident in providing accurate assessments of how well their pupils are progressing. An in-depth scrutiny of the work pupils have completed this year confirms they are making at least good progress.
- Visiting the school enables one to appreciate how happy and how well looked after pupils are. The highly positive and aspirational culture is formed through excellent staff/pupil relationships. Staff provide an excellent range of enriching experiences both within the school and through educational visits and residential. Most parts of the school are well resourced. However, pupils say they would like the school library to be improved. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the core of their education and is excellent. So too is pupils' behaviour, even where space is tight in the playground.
- You have strengthened leadership at all levels. Senior teachers are clear about their responsibilities and their role in improving the quality of teaching. Support and training for teachers is much improved because these are much more closely matched to the individual strengths and development needs of staff, as identified through careful evaluation of their work. You have restructured teaching assistants' responsibilities and this has led directly to improvement in the quality of teaching. This is particularly noticeable in key stage 1. The impact of the local governing body on the quality of education is improving rapidly. Based on an honest reflection of past practice, the local governing body is quickly increasing its capacity to both support the school and challenge you, ensuring that standards are being maintained or improved. The local governing body is aware further improvement is required of them and the multi-academy trust is well placed to provide the necessary support. The leadership team as a whole has considerable capacity to ensure that pupils continue to be well taught and thrive.
- Inspection surveys of pupils, staff and parents confirm that the school has

improved during your leadership. Only one parent recorded any negative comments. Other comments were littered with phrases like 'mathematics has been transformed in the last two years and children have individualised learning plans to help them progress and feel proud in their achievements' and 'since the new head has arrived, there has been a great deal of improvement'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the local governing body continues to improve, becoming more able to accurately evaluate the quality of education provided and hold the headteacher to account for school improvement with increased rigour
- systems used to moderate and validate assessments made by teachers on how well pupils are achieving are further developed
- they apply the same drive that has improved the quality of English and mathematics to improving humanities topic work.

I am copying this letter to the chair of directors for The Good Shepherd Multi-Academy Trust, the chair of the school's local governing board, the director of education for the Diocese of Carlisle, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cumbria. 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 the school. We visited classes and scrutinised pupils' work in a range of subjects and from a range of year groups. I met with three members of the local governing board and spoke with two representatives of the multi-academy trust. I spoke with a group of older pupils. 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 22 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. I considered the views of 21 parents who texted me their comments and a letter written by one parent. I took account of 31 responses pupils made to an inspection survey and seven responses made by staff.