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Mr Clive Wisby
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Wisby

Short inspection of Caedmon Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 January 2018, 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your staff and the governing body are ambitious for the school. In response to the previous inspection, you have worked relentlessly to develop the quality of teaching, increasing the rigour with which you check on the quality of provision across the school. As a result, teaching has improved, pupils are making better progress and standards have risen. This is particularly the case in writing and mathematics, where progress is strong. Consequently, by the time they leave the school, more pupils are now well prepared for their secondary education in these areas of learning.

Pupils enjoy school and were keen to tell me about the good friends they make. They identify kindness and concern for others, as well as acceptance of those with different backgrounds and cultures, as important values in their school. Pupils demonstrate exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They notice and appreciate their teachers' efforts to make learning fun. Most teachers set the highest expectations of their pupils and pupils respond with alacrity. This was exemplified in the Year 1 class, where pupils rushed from the carpet to their tables to get started quickly on their writing, linked to their reading of 'The Smartest Giant in Town'. This excellent conduct and enthusiasm is typical in classrooms across key stages 1 and 2. Older pupils articulate the importance of their learning, because teachers take the time to make meaningful links between the work they set and the skills that pupils will need in their future lives.

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire, or who spoke to me personally, recognise and value the work of staff and leaders. Families see Caedmon as 'the heart of the community' and particularly appreciate the

support they receive from the school when they are experiencing challenging personal circumstances.

The governing body is a strength of the school. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and are passionate about the work they do. Their well-documented evidence demonstrates their regular and appropriate challenge to school leaders. For example, robust questions from governors led to the introduction of a new curriculum which has led to much-improved standards in phonics. Governors keep a careful eye on the school. Termly open days enable them to 'check-in' with pupils so that they can assure themselves that pupils are happy and safe. A new system for reviewing funding to support disadvantaged pupils has enabled governors to have a much clearer picture of the school's work in this area. However, governors recognise that, occasionally, some of the targets which are set to develop the school could be sharper, so that the impact of leaders' work can be evaluated more precisely.

You recognised that standards achieved by pupils in reading across the school were not strong enough and this was an area that I was keen to explore during this inspection. I was very pleased to see that your carefully planned work has led to significant improvements in the achievement of pupils in phonics, ensuring that the early foundations of reading are now much more secure. Assessment information and pupils' work shows that, across key stages 1 and 2, most pupils are now making rapid progress in reading. You know that, in upper key stage 2, there are some pupils who are still not reaching the expected standard for their age. Your development plans reflect your awareness that there is still more to do to further accelerate progress, so that all pupils can become accomplished readers.

Since the previous inspection, you have improved the achievement of children across the early years. Your regular meetings to review children's progress have been instrumental in enabling earlier support for those who need to catch up quickly. However, you acknowledge that the proportion of children reaching the expected standard for their age is not yet good enough. Increasing the pace of children's progress across the Reception Year remains a priority for your work.

You and your leadership team have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and are clear about what needs to be better. The strong ethos of team working among staff and leaders has enabled you to steadily secure improvements, since the previous inspection, in many aspects of the school's work. This shared determination and the track record of success reflect the capacity of you and your staff to continue to improve the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the leadership team have ensured that arrangements to safeguard pupils are fit for purpose. Detailed checks are made to ensure the suitability of adults to work with children. Through regular training, staff have an appropriate understanding of the signs and symptoms which would indicate that pupils may be at risk of harm. Staff have confidence that leaders will act promptly, should they raise any concerns about pupils.

Leaders engage appropriately with other agencies to take action where pupils are at risk. However, because several senior staff are involved in leading this work, some of the school's records are kept in different places and do not document everything that staff and other agencies are doing to keep pupils safe. Leaders have already recognised this issue and are taking steps to address it, so that records provide a comprehensive overview of actions to safeguard pupils.

Your tireless work to improve pupils' attendance has paid off. Attendance has improved and is now above the national average, ensuring that pupils have the best chance to make the most of their time at school. Your meticulous tracking of pupils' absence highlighted an issue with some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You and your special educational needs coordinator have addressed this effectively so that those pupils are no longer vulnerable as a result of low attendance.

The curriculum provides suitable opportunities so that pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Pupils from key stage 2 were quick to advise me on the importance of not sharing personal information online. They are confident that staff will support them to address any issues or worries they have, whether they originate in school or at home.

Inspection findings

- You and the leader for English have been highly effective in improving the teaching of reading. You anticipated the dip in pupils' attainment in reading in 2017 at the end of Year 6 and reviewed your curriculum to develop a detailed plan of action. Staff have received training so that they know how to teach the range of skills that pupils need to become fluent and expert readers. During the inspection, in the Year 5 classroom, the teacher skilfully modelled what it is to be a curious reader and ask oneself questions during the reading process. Pupils' workbooks show that they are now regularly required to infer and deduce from what they read. Pupils are exposed to a wider range of stimulating reading material and most express their love of reading. Pupils' progress in reading has accelerated rapidly over the past year, including that of disadvantaged pupils. You know that, because of historical lower attainment in the early years and key stage 1, there are still some pupils who need to make even faster progress to catch up and you have appropriate plans in place to work on this.
- Over time, you have grown a team of leaders who work effectively with you to develop the school. Subject and key stage leaders are grateful for the work you do to help them to develop their leadership skills, for example through undertaking joint reviews of the quality of teaching and learning. All recognise the importance of bringing together a wide range of evidence so that they have a full and accurate picture of what is being achieved in the area they lead. This deep understanding of the school's performance, coupled with a willingness to seek external advice and research good practice, is enabling the wider leadership team to make a strong contribution to the development of teaching and learning.
- Since the previous inspection, you have improved the accuracy of teachers' assessment and their use of this to plan work at the right level so that pupils can make better progress in writing and mathematics. Staff have benefited from training to improve their subject knowledge. Pupils' workbooks show that, in mathematics, they are frequently challenged to solve tricky problems and to explain their

mathematical reasoning. Writing workbooks show that the successful teaching of grammar is embedded within meaningful opportunities for pupils to write at length. Workbooks show that progress has improved significantly in these areas across the school, including for the most able pupils. This is reflected in outcomes at the end of key stages 1 and 2, which have improved significantly. In 2017, the progress made by Year 6 pupils in writing and mathematics was high and in the top 20% of all schools nationally.

- Children get off to a good start in their Nursery Year. During the inspection, children enjoyed the range of tasks provided by their teacher. In particular, a group of boys relished the challenge of working in a spidery den with torches to make shape shadows and to name them. Adults effectively develop children's language skills, ensuring that most make strong progress in this important area. However, in the Reception classes, some activities do not demand enough of children. Consequently, progress is not rapid enough to enable some children to reach the standard expected for their age. While some children engage well with the resources that adults have provided, others flit between different areas of the classroom without purpose. Too much time is spent on activities that do not build well on what children can already do. Leaders acknowledge this and recognise that this is an area that requires further development so that a higher proportion of children are well prepared for the curriculum in Year 1.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- children's progress accelerates in the Reception Year so that more achieve and exceed the expected standard for their age
- pupils' progress in reading continues to rise across key stage 2 so that more pupils reach the expected standard by the end of Year 6
- targets for improvement are sharpened, so that leaders, including governors, can review the impact of the school's work incisively
- the school's work to safeguard vulnerable pupils is recorded comprehensively and held in one central location.

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

Yours sincerely

Claire Brown
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and other members of the leadership team. I also met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and two other governors. I discussed the school's journey of improvement with a representative of the local authority. I visited classrooms and observed teaching and learning jointly with you. I spoke to pupils during their lessons and also met with a group of pupils from key stage 2. I listened to a group of pupils read and talked to them about their reading. I reviewed pupils' work in a range of subjects in a sample of their workbooks. You presented information detailing pupils' progress and attainment, the school's self-evaluation document, the school development plan and your arrangements for checking the work of teachers. Documents relating to your work to safeguard pupils, including records of incidents, were checked. I reviewed the information and policies on the school's website. I considered the 25 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.