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5 March 2018

Mr L McClure
Headteacher
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Dear Mr McClure

Short inspection of Springvale Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 February 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Strengths in the care and welfare of pupils have been maintained. These are highlighted by parents and carers and governors as a key strength of the school. Behaviour is consistently well managed. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. Recent updates and newsletters to parents celebrate weekly attendance of 98%. Staff are proud to teach at the school and are committed to doing their best for pupils. Relationships are harmonious, and pupils say that the school is friendly. Pupils' attitudes to learning remain very strong. Typically in lessons, pupils concentrate well and set about the work they are given with determination and great interest.

Following the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching, and especially in mathematics. Successively, pupils' achievement in mathematics at key stage 1 and key stage 2 has improved. By the end of key stage 2, the most able pupils made swift progress to achieve higher standards than seen nationally in 2017.

You have made a strong start to your tenure as headteacher. You have taken time to observe the school, recognising its strengths and where things need to be updated or developed further. You recognise that occasionally, for some pupils, the school has not got the balance in teaching right and they are not challenged as well as they could be. The plans and actions that you are implementing have the support of governors, the wider senior leadership team and staff. Measurable targets and

mechanisms for identifying change have been identified. However, there are a few areas, such as subject leadership and pupils' personal development, where this is not the case. The ethos and high expectations that you have established in the school contribute to staff feeling well supported. Training and development programmes are used effectively to challenge and support teachers' improvement. Staff who responded to the inspection survey feel motivated, respected and supported to take risks in their teaching.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. They keep a close check on the school environment and resources to reduce the risks of pupils being harmed. The school's single central record of pre-employment checks meets statutory requirements. As the designated safeguarding lead, you have ensured that all staff receive regular training and updates, so they can recognise and respond to any concerns. A sample of referrals and case studies showed that support for pupils is timely. Links with statutory services for further care, or early help, are effective in ensuring that vulnerable pupils and their families are supported. The school takes its responsibilities for pupils' welfare and safety seriously, and knows where pupils are. Absence from school is followed up rigorously, and any patterns to non-attendance are questioned and checked.

In discussions during the inspection, pupils said that sometimes other children might be mean unintentionally and that generally tolerance, respect and friendliness are more typical behaviours. 'Buddy corner' and pupil play leaders help them to learn to play safely with each other at lunch and playtimes. Pupils also say that staff are quick to act to sort out any occasional bullying that takes place. They are convinced that their worries or concerns are taken seriously if they seek help from a member of staff. Almost all pupils say that they feel safe at school. They explained how work the school does on road and rail safety, and use of the internet and mobile devices, helps them to understand risks and know how to stay safe.

Inspection findings

- Outcomes in mathematics have improved since the last inspection. A track record of consistent improvement in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 has been established. You have done so by developing a coherent and progressive curriculum. You have put into practice consistent approaches to the teaching of mathematical skills and established high expectations of pupils to explain their thinking.
- Mostly pupils are challenged in lessons and stretched by the work taking place in writing. Teachers demonstrate effectively how to undertake a particular problem or demonstrate a strategy. Consequently, pupils are developing secure knowledge. School assessments show that progress is accelerating and more pupils are working at a greater depth of understanding. However, there is more to do to embed the work, so that pupils achieve the highest standards.
- Strengths in reading have been maintained since the previous inspection. The school has worked hard to develop teaching further and establish daily reading

practice. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 are responding positively to teachers' higher expectations. You have increased resources in the form of more challenging books and specialist teaching. You have established a pattern of regular meetings with the literacy leader. These are enabling the most able pupils to learn about more complex themes, articulate their thoughts and summarise the key points.

- In 2017, standards fell in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1. Pupils currently in key stage 1 are making steady progress. Year 3 pupils are currently making swifter progress. Their books show a steady mastery of the basics in writing. Pupils have frequent opportunities to write at length and apply basic grammar and punctuation.
- Teachers use their assessments to inform the planning of work. However, work is not always adapted within lessons to ensure that it remains challenging, so that learning moves on quickly. Occasionally some of the pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 find work too easy in mathematics and English. In addition, while the achievement gap for disadvantaged pupils is narrowing, it is not doing so quickly in all classes.
- Work to identify the individual barriers to disadvantaged pupils' progress has begun in discussion with pupils and their parents. However, the school now needs to identify explicitly the difference that the additional support and pupil premium funding is making to the pupils. The school's recent analysis of progress does not clearly identify whether the progress of the small cohort of disadvantaged pupils is improving across the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the work pupils encounter in reading, writing and mathematics is challenging for all, so that even more of them reach higher standards
- they use their detailed whole-school analysis of progress to ensure that the gap for disadvantaged pupils continues to narrow, and does so quickly in all classes
- school plans are more explicit about long-term goals and what success looks like, to help leaders check that their work is effective and gauge when new actions are required.

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

Yours sincerely

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you to discuss your evaluation of the school and to agree the key lines of enquiry for this inspection. I also met with the deputy headteacher and literacy leader, two governors and a representative from the local authority.

I visited each classroom and observed work in classrooms and in the displays around the school with yourself and the deputy headteacher. I also reviewed a sample of pupils' books and spoke with pupils about their work. I formally met with pupils to gather their views about their work, developments in the school and to follow up questions about bullying and safeguarding.

I read school leadership documents, including the school development plan, governors' minutes, pupil performance data and information from leaders' monitoring. I reviewed the school's safeguarding procedures and looked at a sample of case files and the single central record.

I considered the 85 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the 14 responses to the staff questionnaire and 58 responses to the pupil questionnaire.