

9 March 2018

Mrs C Beddoe  
Headteacher  
Maryport Infant School  
Camp Road  
Maryport  
Cumbria  
CA15 6JN

Dear Mrs Beddoe

### **Short inspection of Maryport Infant 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 March 2014.

### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You note that 'the child is at the centre of everything we do'. During the inspection, this was clearly evident. You have a passion for education and a commitment to ensuring that nurturing principles guide your leadership.

The governing body is hard-working and fully aware of the strategic role that it plays. Governors undertake training to ensure that the support they provide to leaders is of a high standard. Your senior leaders are fully committed and share your ethos. They, like you, are well trained and, as a consequence, offer effective support both within and beyond the school.

The parents and carers responding to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were exceptionally complimentary about the school and hold you, your leaders and other staff in high regard. One comment which reflects the view of many was: 'a wonderful school where each child's individual needs are met by friendly, approachable staff. Communication between parents and staff is second to none.'

The pupils I spoke to were polite and thoughtful. They appreciate the opportunities that you provide for them, particularly those relating to sport. Pupils spoke with particular enthusiasm about the climbing challenge they received as a reward for focused reading. They also enjoy the football and orienteering activities which they identify as important in helping them to remain fit and healthy.

Following the last inspection, you were given a number of areas to improve. The first was to ensure that pupils pronounce words accurately in order to improve their spelling. Additionally, they were to speak using correct grammar to improve their writing skills. You provide your staff with focused training which enables them to offer effective support. As a consequence, pupils are corrected when they use inappropriate grammar or pronounce words incorrectly. You are aware that this is an ongoing process but are justly proud of the improvements that have been made.

You were also asked to raise attainment and achievement further. Once again, much improvement has been made in this area. You provide teachers and teaching assistants with a broad range of training. You also ensure that teachers are able to share from the good practice of others, both in school and from other schools in the locality. As a result of this focused approach, the most recent published performance data for your school shows that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is well above that seen nationally at both the expected and the higher levels at the end of key stage 1. Similarly, attainment in science is well above the national average at the end of key stage 1.

During the inspection, we discussed areas where further work is required to support your school improvement. You recognise that, while children make good progress from their starting points, many enter the school with skills that are typically below those expected for their age. You are also aware that a significant proportion of these children do not reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. However, you are justly proud of the fact that these gaps are beginning to narrow. In addition, we agreed that further work is required by leaders to ensure that parents are supported to become stronger partners in their children's learning. This is most noticeable in the areas of early reading, phonics and children's social and emotional preparation for starting school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are of a high standard. All required checks take place to ensure that adults in school do not pose any threat to pupils. Visitors are checked on entry and the school site is safe and secure.

As designated safeguarding leader, you ensure that all staff follow the school's child protection policy and other legislation which is in place to keep pupils safe. You work closely with your deputy safeguarding leader to ensure that all governors and staff receive a broad range of training relating to safeguarding. As a consequence, pupils are well protected. Pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 who met with me during the inspection said that they feel safe and are well cared for in school.

You complete an annual audit of safeguarding and undertake regular health and safety checks throughout the school. This ensures that pupils are kept free from harm and risks are minimised. Parents who responded to Parent View were wholeheartedly positive about the care that is provided for their children within school.

## Inspection findings

- You, together with other leaders, including governors, know the school well. Your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness is clear and accurate. Action is already underway to tackle any relative weaknesses and results were clear to see during the inspection.
- I discussed with you several lines of enquiry during the inspection. The first considered what leaders are doing to improve pupils' attendance. This is because the attendance of several groups of pupils has been below that seen nationally. Leaders are aware of this issue and work closely with parents to offer appropriate support and advice. Teachers discuss attendance issues during parents' evenings and meetings are held with individual parents when their children's absence becomes a concern. Pupils are presented with certificates for 100% attendance and celebrate good attendance during assemblies. As a consequence, attendance is improving, with almost all groups of pupils currently having an attendance level which is broadly in line with that seen nationally.
- Children enter the school with skills that are typically below those expected for their age. From these low starting points, children make good progress. You are, however, working closely with staff to ensure that an increased proportion of children achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. You provide opportunities for staff members in the early years to visit other schools to learn from the good practice of others. Your early years leader is well trained and experienced. This experience is used effectively to offer support to teachers and teaching assistants, both in your school and in other schools within the locality. You have forged strong links with a range of external agencies. They have worked closely with you to offer advice on areas of improvement.
- Your actions to increase the proportion of children reaching a good level of development also include increasing the number of staff working in the early years. This is because you have accurately identified that the children require additional support with phonics and with the development of early social and emotional skills. As a consequence of your drive to develop provision in the early years, your school's most recent performance information shows that there is an increasing proportion of children achieving at a level expected in Reception. Nevertheless, we agreed that further work is required to ensure that the provision and range of resources available for children, both indoors and outside, are developed further to support children's ability to achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- You run a successful Nursery and have recently introduced provision for two-year-old children. Within these environments, effective support is provided for children in their early development. As a consequence, these children thrive. They are confident learners who are well prepared for the expectations placed upon them within the Reception Year.
- You have noted that children's poor language development on entry to school affects their understanding of phonics. You are addressing this issue effectively. Pupils are taught phonics and reading every day in a highly structured manner. The tracking of pupils' progress enables leaders to highlight immediately any

pupils who are falling behind. These pupils receive additional support, either in small groups or individually. As a consequence, your school's most recent performance information shows that the proportion of pupils who are working at the standard expected for their age is increasing considerably. However, leaders agree that training opportunities provided for parents by the school require further development. This is to ensure that parents can more effectively support the development of their children's early reading skills, including the practising of sounds at home.

- You, together with a dedicated team of staff and governors, ensure that pupils are encouraged, nurtured and provided with a broad range of educational experiences. This includes the opportunity to represent their school as eco and school councillors, sport leaders and playground buddies. As a consequence, when pupils leave your school, they enter the next stage of their educational journey with a high level of academic achievement and the confidence to aim high.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a wider range of training opportunities are provided for parents to enable them to more effectively practise sounds and early reading skills with their children
- the early years provision is further developed to ensure that a greater proportion of children achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.

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

Yours sincerely

Gill Pritchard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the deputy designated safeguarding leader. I also met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with the leaders for English and the early years. I also spoke with a local authority general adviser. I had a formal discussion with a group of pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 and met with your school administrator.

Accompanied by you, I visited all year groups in the school, an intervention group, the Nursery and the provision for two-year-old children. I observed pupils'

behaviour during lessons and as they moved around the school. I scrutinised examples of pupils' work and reviewed documents, including your record of checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. I also examined the school's self-evaluation, improvement plan and assessment information. I took account of the 40 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 15 responses to the staff survey. I also considered information posted on the school's website.