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Mr Michael Cull
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Dear Mr Cull

Short inspection of Ormsgill Nursery and Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 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 October 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since your appointment, you have galvanised the school and given it a clear sense of purpose and direction. Your inclusive and open approach drives the school's work and characterises its ethos. There is no doubt that your school is the hub of the local community.

You acknowledge that progress and outcomes across some areas of the school are not strong, especially in the early years and key stage 1. We also agreed that other aspects of leadership and management, such as governance and the roles of middle leaders of subjects in the wider curriculum, need strengthening.

You have embraced these challenges with vigour. Complacency is not an option and you have high expectations of all your staff. They all have their role to play. All of your staff team hold you in high regard. They feel valued and appreciated. Through your encouragement and support many feel empowered to develop their roles in education. All of your staff give good levels of support to teachers new to the profession. Staff went out of their way to tell me how you ensure that the mental health and well-being of staff, pupils and their families are promoted well.

Parents are equally generous in their praise of the school. They typically commented: 'This school has a lot to offer and staff go the extra mile.' They also

spoke positively about the high-quality provision provided for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

As we toured the school together, I observed delightful pupils who were keen to learn. Their joy at being at school is evident from their happy, smiley faces, which never leave them throughout the day. They behave well and relationships at all levels are respectful.

Pupils were keen to talk to me. They told me that they feel safe in school and in the playground. Pupils share any worries or concerns they have with their teachers. They have a clear awareness of the different forms of bullying and the distress that it can cause. Pupils say that bullying sometimes occurs but, 'Staff soon sort it out.' Pupils also have a secure awareness of how to keep themselves safe when online.

Pupils talked to me about what they have been learning in subjects such as history, geography and science. With delight, they told me about the varied range of visitors and trips that you arrange to broaden their experiences and ignite their passion for learning. For example, a recent visit from Professor Pumpnickel successfully engaged pupils in scientific thinking. Out-of-school activities such as netball, cookery, table tennis and football are popular with pupils.

Pupils really do have an active voice in the school and contribute to decision-making, for example as members of the school parliament and anti-bullying ambassadors. Older pupils also enjoy the responsibilities you give them as 'reading buddies' to help foster and develop younger pupils' love of reading.

Most of the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection have been successfully addressed. The teaching of phonics has improved and is now a strength of the school. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard has risen steadily in recent years and is now just below the national average. Pupils are now transferring their mathematical skills to other areas of the curriculum, such as science and geography. Teachers have some opportunities to share ideas and expertise so that they can learn from each other. In addition, they now ensure that their lessons move at a faster pace so that no learning time is wasted.

Safeguarding is effective.

Top of the school's list of priorities is keeping pupils safe. You and your staff take your safeguarding responsibilities seriously. Staff are vigilant to any potential safeguarding issues and pass on any concerns. All safeguarding training, including 'Prevent' duty training, is up to date. Staff are conversant with Part 1 of 'Keeping children safe in education'.

Those who have responsibility for safeguarding have been trained at an appropriate level. There are comprehensive procedures in place for the recruitment and selection of staff. A record of visitors to the school is maintained and the single central record is compliant with current requirements. All records relating to safeguarding that were examined at this inspection were fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- Ensuring that pupils attend school on a regular basis is a central part of the school's work. Although attendance figures are broadly in line with the national average, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school was high last year. As a result of targeted support led by your assistant headteacher, this trend is reversing quickly. Good attendance is celebrated and any unspecified absences are swiftly followed up. The school also makes parents aware that poor attendance may have a detrimental impact on their children's progress and attainment.
- Children come into the early years with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age, particularly in speech and language. In 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was 40%, which is significantly below the national average of 71%. In addition, girls performed much better than boys in reading, writing and mathematics. You and your staff did not shy away from these challenges. As a result of a staffing restructure, outcomes in the early years are improving. Swift action has been taken to improve outcomes for boys in reading, writing and mathematics. Books have been purchased which appeal to boys and staff plan mathematical activities with boys' interests in mind. For example, boys enjoy developing their calculation skills using leaves and stones. Making a meal in the mud kitchen, building a fire engine using crates and measuring blocks of wood provided boys with a wide range of opportunities to develop their language and communication skills.
- In 2017, pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, did not achieve well in reading, writing or mathematics at the end of key stage 1. Again, you and your staff took swift action. For example, reading has been given a much higher profile across the school. Cosy book areas are now available in classrooms and in the corridors. Parents have attended a workshop to help them develop their children's reading skills at home. Much stronger emphasis is now put on developing pupils' comprehension skills, alongside their fluency and enjoyment of reading. To improve writing, a whole-school approach has been adopted to ensure consistency across both key stages. Pupils are now more aware of their writing targets and their achievements in writing are celebrated through displays. Staff have had additional training to help them become more proficient in the teaching of mathematics.
- Although outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are improving at key stage 1, work in pupils' books shows that mathematical activities do not consistently challenge the most able pupils to do their very best. In addition, opportunities to develop problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy skills are not as well developed as they could be. This is also true of opportunities to write at length across the wider curriculum.
- Progress in reading at key stage 2 was significantly below the national average in 2017, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Again, immediate action was taken by you and your staff. Pupils now have access to a much more interesting range of texts and make good use of the school library and the public library, which is housed in the same building. From listening to pupils at key stage 2 read and reviewing current school data, it is clear that progress and outcomes in reading

are improving.

- The challenge that the school faces is ensuring that these improved outcomes in the early years and at key stages 1 and 2 are sustained until the end of the academic year and beyond.
- You have the full support of the governing body. However, we both agreed that the level of challenge governors offer you is not as rigorous as it could be. In addition, they have failed to notice that the school website is not compliant with requirements concerning the information that must be published. For example, information on the curriculum lacks detail and there is no information on the phonics and reading schemes that the school has adopted. The special educational needs report does not evaluate the effectiveness of the provision. Neither does it give details of the procedures for handling complaints made by parents with regard to the special educational needs provision that the school offers. The complaints policy has not been updated since 2014. In addition, there is no information with regard to the date that governors were appointed or who appointed them. Governors' attendance records at committee meetings and full governors' meetings are also missing.
- Middle leaders of English and mathematics have a firm grasp of their subjects. Middle leaders of subjects such as history, geography, art and design, and music are new to their roles, which they have taken on with energy and enthusiasm. However, we both agreed that monitoring arrangements for these subjects are in their infancy.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a greater proportion of children achieve a good level of development and that the difference between the progress of boys and girls continues to diminish
- a greater proportion of pupils reach the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1, with a particular focus on disadvantaged pupils
- progress and outcomes in reading at key stage 2 continue to improve, particularly for disadvantaged pupils
- the roles of middle leaders in subjects such as geography, history, art and design, and music are embedded
- governors hold the school more fully to account for all aspects of its work
- the website is compliant with requirements concerning information that must be published and is checked regularly by governors to ensure that it remains so.

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

Sheila Iwaskow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, members of the governing body, staff and pupils from key stages 1 and 2. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. Accompanied by you, I visited classrooms in the early years and key stage 1 to see the learning that was taking place. I looked at examples of pupils' work in their books and on display. I listened to pupils from Year 6 read. A range of documentation was considered, including the single central record, the school development plan and the school's own assessment information relating to current pupils' progress. I took account of the school's own questionnaire for parents and the one response to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. Consideration was also given to the Ofsted online questionnaires completed by 19 staff and 70 pupils.