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Mrs Alison Maddison  
Head of School  
Hurworth Primary School  
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Darlington  
County Durham  
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Dear Mrs Maddison

### **Short inspection of Hurworth Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 May 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 February 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Staff share your commitment for continuous improvement and understand the high expectations you set for them and for pupils. Staff feel well supported by you and the systems you have established to support their professional development. They speak with enthusiasm about your passion for developing them in order to improve teaching and secure positive outcomes for pupils. You have enabled your team to respond, with much success, to the demands of the new national curriculum. You have secured high levels of attainment at both key stage 1 and key stage 2. Pupils' outcomes are above those seen nationally. In addition, through close tracking, you have secured strong progress for many pupils, particularly the most able. Although, some variance continues for some groups and Reception, you are aware of this and are working closely with your colleagues and trust partners to secure ongoing improvement.

Governors play an active role in the school and undertake joint checks of priority areas for improvement alongside the leadership team. You and your leaders inform them well and, as a result, governors use the information they are given to ensure that the school is working hard for its pupils. You have good relationships with the Lingfield Trust and it is heavily involved in school improvement. Most recently, its members have worked alongside your middle leaders to develop their skills. The trust has confidence in your leadership and uses your school as a model of good practice for other schools in the trust.

The parents and carers I spoke to were extremely positive about the school. Parents told me that their children enjoy coming to school and are happy and interested in their learning. All parents who responded to the online Ofsted survey, Parent View, would recommend the school to others. One parent reflected the views of many and said, 'My son wants to go to school every day, and that speaks volumes!' Parents feel that communication is strong, and this enables them to be involved in their child's learning. They also feel that staff are approachable.

The areas for improvement raised at the last inspection have been addressed well. Recent performance information and work in books show that most-able pupils are challenged. However, there is still some work to do to ensure that pupils have lots of opportunities to write across the curriculum. In addition, you and your leaders must continue to ensure that pupils' writing is as strong in other subjects as it is in their English books. You have correctly recognised this and have recently undertaken some whole-school training to address it.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite, well mannered and enjoy learning. You and your team have cultivated positive learning behaviours in a stimulating and purposeful learning environment. Pupils told me they enjoy coming to school because teachers 'make lessons fun'. Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular and sporting activities available to them and speak with pride about representing the school in sporting events. The pupils I spoke to are justifiably proud of their school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff training is up to date. Several staff and a governor have received safer recruitment training, and recruitment checks and induction procedures are thorough. You ensure that procedures are in place to ensure that new staff receive safeguarding and 'Prevent' training as part of their induction. Teaching staff are regularly updated in staff meetings. The safeguarding policy is available on the school's website. Staff understand the important role that they play in keeping children safe. You ensure that pupils and families receive timely support when needed. You have strong links with external agencies and are tenacious in the way you pursue support for families. When this support is not available, you ensure that the school does all it can to check that children are safe.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school. The parents who responded to the Ofsted online survey agree. Children say that bullying is rare and those who responded to the Ofsted pupil survey say that adults are 'really good' at resolving it when it does happen. Pupils understand equality well and know that treating people differently because of the colour of their skin or religion is wrong. Pupils shared ways that the school has taught them to stay safe online and have worked with the NSPCC to protect themselves from different forms of abuse. Pupils are confident and say they would speak to a trusted adult if they were worried about anything.

## Inspection findings

- Since the last inspection, you have worked with your team to increase challenge for most-able pupils. In books, there is clear evidence that pupils are given challenging tasks when they are ready for them. Pupil progress meetings are successful in setting targets for pupils and planning activities to boost their progress. Pupils say they are regularly challenged in lessons and that teachers help them to succeed when they find work very challenging. Most-able pupils made the strongest progress over key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics in 2017. Their progress was among the top 20% of children in reading and writing.
- Your writing leader was appointed in September 2017 and has introduced strategies to develop writing, particularly for boys. Your most recent assessment data shows that girls continue to achieve better than boys in writing in most classes in key stage 2. You are aware of this and have taken steps to address the difference. Teachers talk to boys about what they are interested in and you have planned your teaching around what boys say they want to learn. You have also worked hard to motivate boys to be readers. For example, you have recently invited a male author into school to inspire the boys to read and be writers. You have also tried to include more drama and videos in writing lessons to inspire boys. This is having a positive impact on their progress. We looked together at pupils' books and could see that boys are making strong progress as a result of these initiatives. You know that you need to monitor the progress of middle-ability pupils in writing and put strategies in place to help them make as much progress as most-able pupils.
- Evidence in English books shows that teachers have worked effectively to improve the quality of pupils' punctuation and their sentence construction. However, these standards are not consistently reflected in pupils' work in their geography and history books.
- I spoke with your special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) to understand how the school uses additional funding to support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities to meet the expected and higher standards in all subjects. In recent years, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have made weaker progress than their peers at the end of key stage 2. The SENCo is new to the role and is being supported by established leaders in the school and the trust. The data you shared with me shows that most current pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress, though their progress in writing is slightly less than in reading and mathematics. Teachers create plans for all pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, which are reviewed with parents each half term. The SENCo reviews the targets the teachers set in these plans to ensure that they are appropriate. The SENCo oversees a wide range of intervention programmes to boost the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Systems for checking the effectiveness of these programmes are at an early stage and you recognise that it is an important next step for the school to ensure that they are effective in improving the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

- The school has strong links with outside agencies to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. There are currently three pupils in the school with an education, health and care plan. Additional funding is used to provide additional adult support for these pupils to ensure that they can access learning in their classrooms. I could see that these pupils are well supported and making progress when I visited lessons. You seek advice from external agencies to make sure that teachers know how to support pupils with SEN and/or disabilities in their class.
- I worked with your mathematics leader to explore the progress girls make over key stage 2 in mathematics. You have worked with girls and found out that some lack confidence in mathematics. You have encouraged teachers to show pupils that making mistakes is a part of learning. I saw teachers model this process in their teaching. You also encourage all pupils to discuss their thinking in mathematics, which has been successful in raising their confidence, particularly for girls. Leaders focus on the progress of girls in mathematics in pupil progress meetings. You have established a programme of interventions to boost pupils' progress in key stage 2. When I looked at girls' mathematics books, I could see that they are making good progress. The schools' most recent assessment data shows that both boys and girls are making good progress in mathematics over key stage 2, and that girls' progress is stronger, reversing the differences seen in 2016 and 2017.
- The mathematics leader is aware that progress in mathematics in the Reception class has been lower than in reading and writing. You have worked with staff in the Reception class weekly, and teach demonstration lessons to improve others' teaching. As a result, the youngest children are making good progress in mathematics.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they develop strategies to further accelerate pupils' progress in writing, particularly for middle-ability pupils and in all subjects across the curriculum
- leaders who are new to their posts continue to receive support and evaluate the impact of teaching and intervention programmes on progress in their subject or area.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Darlington. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Timothy Scargill  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, you and I observed pupils' learning and behaviour in five classes. I worked with you and other leaders to consider learning in pupils' workbooks. I met with parents at the start of the school day. During the day, I held meetings with leaders across the school. I also met with the trust-appointed school improvement partner and five members of the school's governing body. I looked at a range of documentation so that I could consider the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, leadership and management, pupils' progress and your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the quality of teaching. I took into account 52 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 28 parental free-text responses. In addition, I analysed 23 responses to the staff questionnaire and 28 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.