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Mrs Kathleen Allison  
Executive headteacher  
Snape Community Primary School  
Ings Lane  
Snape  
Bedale  
North Yorkshire  
DL8 2TF

Dear Mrs Allison

### **Short inspection of Snape Community Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 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.

You and your team have ensured that Snape School is a happy and safe place for pupils to be educated. As mentioned at the last inspection, you have ensured that the complexities of two small schools, working very closely together, has ensured that pupils that are registered at Snape School are advantaged by this federation. At the last inspection, leaders were asked to consider and improve achievements in writing, particularly for most-able pupils. This you have done well. Pupils now write well and reach standards that are at or above that of other pupils of the same age nationally. You and your team recognise that spellings are often identified as a weakness in some pupils' writing. However, this issue is already being addressed appropriately in your school development plan. At the last inspection, strengths were seen in the quality of both teaching and behaviour. These strengths have been maintained.

Since the last inspection, you have taken up the post of executive headteacher and your assistant headteacher, who has worked in the school for some years, is also new to her role. You have employed a new business manager who works across all of the three schools where you are an executive headteacher. The rest of the staffing team has remained stable. Several of the governing body, including the chair of governors, are new to post.

Most staff responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and a large proportion of parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and free-text facility. All who responded consider that the school is led and managed well.

Pupils continue to behave extremely well. They are excitable and eager to learn. Learning is often noisy due to pupils' enthusiasm to contribute; however, when appropriate, they are calm and quiet. You and your team have created an ethos where difference, in any form, is welcomed and accepted. Pupils learn about different cultures, religions and lifestyles. They spoke enthusiastically about their trip to a mosque and the differences and similarities between those people who choose to pray in a mosque and those who choose to pray in a church. Older pupils regularly take part in debates where all opinions are valued and respected. Those parents and staff that responded to the Ofsted questionnaire all consider that pupils behave well and that adults deal appropriately with any bullying or misbehaviour, should it occur. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance rates are consistently better than other schools nationally, although transition arrangements for some pupils are not as good as they could be. Some of the younger pupils, although happy at Thornton Watlass School, expressed a desire to return to the Snape School site. A small number of older pupils expressed some concern and trepidation about moving to their secondary school due their perceived isolation when they arrive, as numbers of pupils moving are so small.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

All pupils said that they feel safe while they are at school and all parents and staff, who responded to questionnaires, also consider that pupils are safe. All pupils, who were asked, were confident that if they had any concerns, there would be an adult in school whom they could turn to. They were confident that the adult would listen to them and help them. Appropriate steps have been taken by leaders to ensure that the school sites are safe and that checks have been made on adults that spend time with the pupils. Staff are well trained so that they know what signs to look for and whom to turn to if they have any concerns. Adults say that their concerns are always considered and recorded in detail. Links with other professionals to support pupils' welfare are good. Records are always detailed, fit for purpose and stored securely. Governors use their skills and knowledge to support the school extremely well, especially around safeguarding and health and safety. They also take time to check that pupils are well educated in how to stay safe when using the internet. Teachers also take the time to educate pupils about other aspects of safety, such as road safety, to familiarise them with situations such as zebra crossings, which they may not experience in their immediate locality.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, I considered whether leaders were able to ensure that pupils received a wide enough curriculum and range of experiences so that they were not disadvantaged by attending a small school. The curriculum, that you and your team plan for the pupils, is excellent and a strength of the school. Pupils learn through an exciting, varied and well-planned range of activities. For

example, an enterprise scheme that pupils took part in challenged them to double their money from £10 to £20 through an entrepreneurial project. Pupils achieved well with this challenge. For example, profits from popcorn sales enabled the purchase of the new classroom pet. Pupils talk enthusiastically and look forward to Fantastic Fridays. On Fridays, pupils at both schools join together and take part in activities based around a book. In the afternoon, a number of enrichment activities are available such as forest school, golf coaching, and origami and swimming. Teachers organise a range of activities in the clubs they arrange after school so that they appeal to pupils' different interests. A culmination of attending the chess club has enabled pupils to become chess champions in a Yorkshire competition. Accolades, such as becoming the area hockey champions, are not uncommon.

- Leaders ensure that monitoring of teaching and learning takes place regularly for the pupils registered with Snape School, regardless of which school site they are learning at. This gives you an accurate picture of where the strengths and weaknesses are. This accurate and astute self-evaluation has helped you plan actions and effectively improve weaknesses that arise, such as the quality of pupils' writing and the quality of teaching in key stage 1. Your school improvement plan clearly identifies how you are now addressing the continued weaknesses that some pupils are demonstrating in their spelling skills. Teachers and subject leaders are held to account for pupils' progress through regular meetings where a range of evidence is considered. While most leaders have clearly defined roles and areas of responsibility, not all do. This lack of clarity causes some confusion with regard to responsibilities and accountability, particularly at the Snape School site.
- During the inspection, I considered whether the quality of teaching was able to allow most-able pupils in key stages 1 and 2 to make the progress they are capable of. Teachers plan carefully for the different needs of all pupils. Activities are well matched to pupils' needs and adapted during lessons as required. As a result, pupils of different abilities make good and better progress. Pupils speak about how they are supported immediately if they do not understand, and how they move on to a harder challenge when appropriate. Work in pupils' books show how concepts, particularly in mathematics, are learned through using a range of first-hand experiences. The books also show how a mix of written, practical and problem-solving activities help to give pupils a greater depth of understanding. Teachers establish excellent relationships so that pupils are comfortable to ask for help or to admit when they have made a mistake or do not understand. Teachers make learning interesting for pupils through good use of the outdoor and indoor environments and through a carefully planned, exciting curriculum. Teachers work extremely closely with other schools so that pupils are not disadvantaged by being in small year groups; for example, joining with other schools has enabled girls to be part of a local girls' football team.
- Children in the early years learn in an environment that makes learning fun. Both indoors and outdoors, they are able to access a range of materials so that they can improve their knowledge and skills. Adults encourage children to use the environment to help them learn independently, which they do well. For example, when completing a piece of writing, a child was directed to materials which

helped her solve her own problem and carry on with her writing. Adults give children problems to solve while they are playing with equipment to help them learn and discover at a greater depth. Adults follow children's progress carefully but, on occasion, planning does not acknowledge the achievements children have made and therefore expectations of what they can learn next are sometimes too low.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the roles and responsibilities of all those who hold leadership roles are clear to all, which allows them to be held to account
- transition arrangements take into account the needs of individual pupils so that they are better prepared
- teachers in the early years provision take into account what children have already achieved when planning what they will learn next.

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

Yours sincerely

Jo Sharpe  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and your assistant headteacher. I also spoke to other teachers and leaders during the day. I met with a group of governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I studied work in the books of all the pupils registered at Snape School, regardless of whether they were taught at the Snape School site or the Thornton Watlass School site. I observed teaching of these pupils at both schools. I held meetings with key stage 1 and key stage 2 pupils registered at Snape School but who are taught at Thornton Watlass School. We discussed, among other things, the work in their books.

I reviewed a range of documentation, including your evaluation and improvement plans. I also considered documentation relating to safeguarding, including your recruitment information.

Ten parents, who represent a large proportion of parents, responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the same number responded to the Ofsted free-text facility. Seven staff responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. All these views

were taken into account.