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Mrs Anne Maud  
Headteacher  
Shap Endowed CofE Primary School  
Shap  
Penrith  
Cumbria  
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Dear Mrs Maud

### **Short inspection of Shap Endowed CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 June 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 July 2014.

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 the previous inspection, the school has undergone significant change. You have led a staffing restructure which involved difficult decisions, and managed financial constraints. Despite this, you have maintained a very positive atmosphere in the school and the morale of pupils and staff is high. The majority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, are supportive and said that they would recommend the school to others. However, a significant minority were concerned about the behaviour of a small number of pupils and the progress of pupils in some subjects.

You and your staff go to great lengths to provide high levels of pastoral support. Parents described the 'warm and welcoming environment' and how 'staff understand that a child's emotional well-being is crucial to their general well-being and their ability to study'. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and the vast majority get on very well together.

You, your assistant headteacher and the governors know the school's strengths and are also aware that there are some key aspects that are in need of improvement. At the previous inspection in 2014, inspectors asked the leadership team, including governors, to improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement further, especially in mathematics. You and your leader of mathematics have overseen a

comprehensive review of how you teach mathematics in the school, and the approach that has now been adopted ensures that pupils build up their mathematical skills and then apply them in problem-solving situations. You and the governors know that the most able pupils are not routinely challenged by the work set for them. You have asked teachers to make sure that the most able pupils are further challenged as too few reach the higher standards in mathematics. However, there is evidence in pupils' work that this is beginning to happen.

Inspectors also asked that teachers increase their expectations of what pupils can achieve and make sure that pupils move on more quickly. Evidence of this is reflected in pupils' recent achievement being above the national average in 2017 in mathematics in the early years and key stage 1. However, progress in 2017 was well below the national average as a result of unavoidable turbulence in staffing. Several pupils in key stage 2 have gaps in their learning. Teachers are aware of this and have systems in place to identify and improve pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills. You have been instrumental in providing training for the leader of mathematics. She shares this with other staff. You have also given teachers the opportunity to learn from and work with teachers from other schools and this is improving the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics.

Inspectors also asked you to strengthen the roles of middle leaders in monitoring the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils in their subject or area of responsibility. As yours is a relatively small school, you and your staff have many responsibilities. You have ensured that each subject leader creates an action plan for their subject to contribute to whole-school improvement. Some of these plans lack precise targets and timescales by which to measure the impact of actions taken. You provide time for leaders to monitor progress in their areas of responsibility through observations of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work. This allows staff to provide support and interventions for those pupils who may fall behind with their work.

Your early years team ensures that children settle well into the school because of good transition arrangements between school, home and other nurseries. Although the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development was close to the national average in 2016, it was well below it in 2017. However, this relates directly to this particular cohort of children, several of whom did not attend the school's nursery.

Improvements in pupils' progress are evident in key stage 1 and key stage 2 in reading and writing from published performance information in 2017 and from pupils' work seen during the inspection. However, by the end of key stage 2 the proportion reaching the expected standard in reading remains stubbornly lower than the national average and too few reach the higher standards in English.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

In your role as the designated safeguarding leader, together with your deputy designated safeguarding leader, you work tirelessly to ensure that all safeguarding

arrangements meet requirements. You make sure that staff fully understand their duty and follow systems and procedures for logging concerns. Together with the office manager, you ensure that all necessary checks are made on the suitability of staff to work with children.

You make sure that safeguarding throughout the school has a high profile. You provide staff with training that is up to date so that they and members of the governing body understand the current guidance. You and the deputy designated safeguarding leader follow up all concerns raised by staff and make sure that pupils are kept safe from potential harm. You work well with a wide range of external agencies to provide expertise to support pupils' welfare, as and when necessary. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

### **Inspection findings**

- As part of this inspection, I looked at how effectively you and your staff are taking action to sustain the improvement in outcomes in the phonics screening check in Year 1. You have invested in a range of phonics schemes to meet the needs of particular pupils. For example, there is a particular scheme which is proving effective in meeting the needs of pupils with dyslexia. There are regular phonics sessions taught across Nursery, Reception, key stage 1 classes and, when necessary, for older pupils. You have the responsibility for reading throughout the school and you ensure that staff have the knowledge, skills and resources they need to teach phonics effectively. Leaders regularly analyse information to identify any pupils who are struggling. They act swiftly to ensure that pupils receive help to catch up quickly. As a result, pupils' outcomes in phonics are now stronger than previously.
- Next, I explored how a culture of reading is being embedded across the school. From when children start school, staff have developed a culture that promotes the excitement and anticipation that comes with reading a book. For the younger pupils, you have invested in new books for them to read at home. These match the phonics they are learning in school that week. You provide opportunities for parents to build their skills in how to help their children with reading at home. You and your staff are vigilant in recognising when pupils are not reading at home and therefore falling behind. Staff and volunteers do as much as they can to compensate for this but we discussed the need to continue to work with the few parents who do not regularly read at home with their children. Older pupils told me how important it is to become a competent and fluent reader, both for pleasure and to secure jobs when they are older. The Year 6 pupils are 'buddy' readers for the younger pupils.
- Finally, I met with several leaders and managers, including members of the governing body, to find out how well they identify areas for further improvement. You, your staff and governors know that there is still more to be done to increase whole-school improvement. You have drawn up a school development plan to tackle weaknesses. However, you acknowledged that this plan lacks specific time frames and quantitative targets. This makes tracking and measuring its success challenging. Some governors are still developing their skills in challenging school

leaders so that all groups of pupils reach their full potential, including the most able and the disadvantaged.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to build on their planning for the wide range of abilities so that key stage 2 pupils' progress in mathematics improves
- strategies to improve pupils' reading are further embedded and refined so that they have the maximum possible impact
- they build on strategies to work with the few parents who need to develop their confidence and skills to help their children develop a love of reading beyond school
- school improvement plans are sharpened by including specific timescales for monitoring the impact of actions taken to address the school's most crucial improvement priorities
- governors improve their skills in holding school leaders fully to account for the achievement of all groups of pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Naomi Taylor  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I observed teaching and learning alongside the headteacher and assistant headteacher. I held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders, members of the governing body and the designated safeguarding leader. I analysed 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and I spoke informally with parents at the school gates to seek their views. I also took account of 24 free-text responses from parents. I held a meeting with pupils and also spoke informally with pupils during breaks and in lessons. I reviewed the 11 responses to the Ofsted staff survey. During the inspection, I reviewed a range of school documents. These included: the school's development plans and self-evaluation documents; minutes of the governing body meetings; safeguarding documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.