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Mrs Maggie Wyatt
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Dear Mrs Wyatt

Short inspection of Muscliff Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 October 2018 with Her Majesty's Inspector Sarah McGinnis, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in June 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

Your leadership has created a school that serves the needs of all children in the community, whatever their ability or background. You have led the school through periods of growth and reorganisation while never losing sight of the underlying values that make the school successful and inclusive.

Standards dipped three years ago. However, you reacted well. You gathered like-minded leaders and teachers around you and have led them with tenacity and determination to ensure that pupils make the progress they should. Improvements have duly followed.

Your senior staff are skilled and experienced. They complement you and each other well. As a result of your leadership style, there is a unity of purpose across the leadership team and staff. The staff know what is expected of them and they are confident that they will be given the support they need to reach that expectation. This combination is proving very effective in raising standards across the whole school.

You and your senior colleagues have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. You have clear plans to address weaknesses and good

systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of the improvements you make. This thoughtful approach has led to deep-seated improvements over the past 18 months.

You have developed the roles of middle leaders so that they are able to be more influential across the school. Those responsible for English and mathematics play a key role in supporting their colleagues in further developing the quality of teaching. You have more recently reorganised the leadership of the early years and key stage 1 to bring greater cohesion between the two.

Your commitment to ensuring that the school can meet the needs of all pupils, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is evident. Skilled staff are deployed effectively so that pupils who have social, mental and emotional health needs are given the individual support they need to flourish.

Governors are equally committed to ensuring that the school meets the needs of all pupils. They know the school well through regular meetings and visits to the school. Their understanding of the school's areas for development is clear and they ask challenging questions of the senior leadership team.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture across the school, from the early years to key stage 2. Staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding and know what to do should a pupil bring a concern to them. Pupils know who they can go to should they be worried or feel unsafe.

The school's record-keeping and checks on teachers and others who work with children are well maintained. The appropriate additional safeguards are in place for children in the early years. Governors keep a regular check that systems are up to date.

The school has a higher than average proportion of pupils who have emotional and mental health needs. You and your staff create programmes for these pupils that allow them to continue to make academic progress while receiving the additional pastoral care they need.

Inspection findings

- In this short inspection, we focused particularly on how reading is taught. We focused on the work the school has done to improve standards of reading over the past few years, on how reading is developed from the early years into key stage 1 and on how the most able pupils are given opportunities to reach the highest standards.
- Key stage 2 reading standards have risen incrementally over the past few years. In 2015/16, leaders recognised that standards were not high enough and put in place a series of measures to address the issue. Chief among them has been the focus on increasing the expertise and the influence of the English coordinator

across the school. Well-planned training has also been a major factor in raising standards. In addition, leaders understand the strengths and remaining weaknesses of each year group team. Leaders carefully tailor additional coaching to meet their specific needs.

- Leaders recognise the importance of intervening quickly when pupils fall behind with their reading. Teachers react quickly when they spot a pupil has misunderstood an idea and provide extra support to allow that pupil to keep up.
- Leaders have recognised the effectiveness of the English coordinator's work and have now increased his capacity to support colleagues by providing additional time for this in the week. Early signs are that this is already having an impact on classroom practice. Teachers value the additional advice and support and their teaching of reading is improving as a direct result.
- Leaders understand the importance of pupils reading widely and often. Pupils take part in well-planned class reading activities to help them develop their understanding of their class book. Teachers also encourage pupils to read independently by providing recommended reading lists and setting expectations of reading regularly at home with parents and carers. Books are well matched to each pupil's ability, particularly those appropriate for younger pupils.
- Children make a good start to learning to read in the early years. In the past few years, the proportion of children making expected progress has been well above the national average. In the end of Year 1 phonics screening check, pupils also achieve higher than national standards. However, by the time pupils reach the end of key stage 1, much of this momentum has ebbed away and standards are in line with other schools. This is because pupils' phonics knowledge is not sufficiently embedded to support their independent reading.
- In key stage 1, sometimes, pupils do not make sufficient progress because teachers are not precise in their assessments. This hinders teachers' abilities to plan and deliver learning that builds securely on what pupils know.
- Many more pupils are now reaching high standards in reading in key stage 2 than in previous years. This is the result of recent improvements in the quality of teaching. Teachers are now asking more challenging questions of pupils and encouraging them to think more deeply about the books they read. Pupils are used to discussing their understanding of what they are reading and are enthusiastic and articulate when they talk with one another about their books.
- In key stage 1, more pupils are reaching a greater depth in their reading than in previous years. However, improvements are not as rapid or as secure as they are in key stage 2. Leaders are aware of this issue and it is a focus for the English coordinator's work this year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- standards of reading in key stage 1 improve by making sure that assessments are accurate and helpful and that teachers develop pupils' ability to apply their phonics knowledge
- the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching of reading are addressed.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Lovett
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, inspectors met with you, senior leaders, governors, staff and pupils. We listened to pupils read. We visited lessons to observe learning and looked at the quality of work in pupils' books. We considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including your own self-evaluation and improvement plan. We also looked at safeguarding and behaviour records. We took into account the 139 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, talked to parents and took account of a letter from a parent. We also took account of responses to questionnaires completed by staff and by pupils.