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Mr Anthony Gill  
Headteacher  
Hedworth Lane Primary School  
Hedworth Lane  
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NE35 9JB

Dear Mr Gill

### **Short inspection of Hedworth Lane Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 16 October 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 March 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your passion for the school is shared by governors and staff, and together you have fostered a community where everyone is valued and nurtured. You and senior leaders are uncompromising in your drive to make sure that pupils achieve well and feel safe.

You have dealt effectively with the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. There is greater challenge for pupils in mathematics. You have ensured that pupils' calculation skills have improved, so that they are more successful when tackling problems in mathematics. Your actions have ensured that teaching has become more effective and consistent across the school. You and the staff have implemented effectively the school's policy for marking and feedback, so that most pupils benefit from their teachers' guidance and support.

You correctly judge personal development, behaviour and welfare as strengths of the school. For example, at breaktime, older pupils behaved exceptionally well and explained that they were trusted to bring collectable cards to school to show friends. Staff know each pupil very well and, as a result, are able to quickly put in place any support needed, both from within the school and through outside agencies. Attendance is above average because pupils want to come to school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school, with many that I spoke to highlighting the fact that their children are very happy and excited about coming to school.

Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas that need further development. Plans for improvement are well thought out and address the weaker areas. Observing classroom learning, reviewing pupils' attainment and progress, as well as looking at pupils' books are all well-established features of the checking on planned impact. Regular checks are making a positive difference to the quality of teachers' work and impact. However, checking on the impact of some of the many extra interventions that take place is less well developed and sometimes the implementation of these is not quite as intended. As a consequence, some interventions are less effective than others. Leaders have correctly identified the need to check that interventions are having the desired impact on the pupils' attainment and progress, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

You and your staff work hard to engage with parents so they can help their children at home. An example of this is the recent phonics briefing for the parents of children new to Reception, which was very well attended and which some parents told me they had found very helpful and informative. Parents that spoke to me were almost all entirely positive about the work of the school and many said that the school has improved over the last two years.

You have recently undertaken a whole-school review of the curriculum and made significant changes to promote a more inspiring, practical and interesting curriculum. Pupils enjoy topics such as 'earth and space' and visits out of school, including the annual residential visit for older pupils. You have made sure that your curriculum appeals as much to boys as to girls because you have identified that in some year groups, boys are performing less well than girls. Your teachers are already finding greater interest and enthusiasm from the boys in their classes. For example, one pupil explained that he had really enjoyed studying 'The Highwayman' because it was a poem that told a story. The curriculum is enhanced by many after-school clubs and activities.

Senior leaders have taken effective action to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning remains good. Progress has improved in reading and mathematics and to a slightly lesser degree in writing. Although pupils' work is often neat and legible, not all develop a consistent, joined-up handwriting style and some younger pupils do not form letters correctly. This limits pupils' ability to secure greater depth in their assessed writing. You and your team of leaders have correctly identified this as a key focus for further improvement.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. You and your staff team make sure that the school site is safe and secure, with suitable risk assessments and procedures in place. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and can describe how staff help if there are any problems. The pupils who spoke to me said that bullying is rare, and that staff sort out any problems if bullying does occur. This positive view was confirmed by the parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Almost all said that their children were safe and well looked

after in school.

Appropriate checks are carried out on new staff and governors to make sure that they are suitable to work with children. These checks are recorded appropriately. Staff receive regular training and information covering different aspects of safeguarding, so that their knowledge of good practice is up to date. There are sound arrangements in place to deal with any child protection issues, and leaders work well with other agencies to promote the well-being of individual pupils.

## **Inspection findings**

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry. The first was around how well leaders know the school and have addressed the areas identified for improvement in the last inspection report. Leaders and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This is because you and leaders check pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment regularly. The school improvement plan identifies the right priorities to help improve the school further.
- The second line of enquiry was about how the quality of teaching had been improved, given that there had been improvements to pupils' outcomes, particularly in mathematics. Since the last inspection, you have responded well to the inspectors' request to develop teaching by sharing the skills of the most effective teachers. You have also challenged any underperformance and ensured that your policies for teaching, marking and assessment have been followed more consistently.
- A further line of enquiry was around how effectively pupils are taught basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics and whether or not this met all pupils' needs, particularly those who are disadvantaged and the most able pupils. This was because outcomes show some small difference between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. Also, the most recent Year 6 outcomes showed that the proportions of pupils reaching greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics had declined a little. A detailed work scrutiny in key stage 1 showed that although there are differences in attainment, disadvantaged pupils and others are making similarly good progress over time. Nevertheless, you and senior leaders have rightly identified that there is more to be done to ensure that disadvantaged pupils continue to make good or better progress.
- The exercise books of the most able pupils in upper key stage 2 show that more are on track to reach greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics this year than last year. Their work is of a good standard and shows that they are making good gains in their reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Children in early years continue to make good overall progress from their starting points in almost all areas of learning. The proportion of children at the end of early years achieving a good level of development has increased year on year for the last three years because of the effective improvements led by the new leader. Learning activities are well thought out and as a consequence, children

settle quickly and make good gains in their basic skills.

- You and senior leaders have correctly identified problem solving and reasoning in mathematics as a school priority. As a result, you have developed a school-wide programme that gives pupils opportunities to engage in the more practical and investigative aspects of mathematics. This approach is beginning to show dividends in pupils' books so more pupils are beginning to use their calculation skills when tackling problems.
- You and leaders have ensured continued improvement in results of the Year 1 phonics check, which have improved year on year and are now above average. This reflects secure improvements to the teaching and tracking of pupils' phonic skills. You and your senior leaders have correctly identified that further work is needed to develop writing skills across the school, including the development of letter formation and handwriting. This is in order to allow pupils to demonstrate higher standards of attainment in writing.
- The work and impact of governors have improved. A skills audit was used to identify the skills and knowledge required when new governors were being appointed. Governors know the school well and have a good understanding of pupils' outcomes so they know where further work is needed. They provide appropriate levels of challenge and support to leaders.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- improve further the teaching of letter formation and handwriting, so that pupils develop a consistent handwriting style
- check carefully on the effectiveness of interventions, including the work of support staff, on planned learning and progress, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Amraz Ali  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you to discuss progress since the previous inspection and to agree the key lines of enquiry. I also met with a group of governors, a representative from the local authority and a group of pupils. I spoke to the leaders for English and mathematics. I scrutinised a variety of sources of information, including your plans for improvement, local authority reports and assessment information for all year groups. I examined the school's safeguarding procedures and its child protection documentation and procedures, and met with you to discuss how you implement your role as the designated safeguarding leader. We visited classrooms together and looked at a range of pupils' books in all classes. I also looked at the 50 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 24 staff survey returns.