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Mrs Jill Ashman and Mrs Sharon Weston
Co-Headteachers
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Dear Mrs Ashman and Mrs Weston

Short inspection of Teesville Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 January 2019, 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.

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 taking on the co-headship of the school you have begun to identify the weaknesses in leadership and teaching that have resulted in a decline in pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2. Together, with extensive support from the Iris Learning Trust, you have begun to have a positive impact upon pupils' attainment. You are aware of the areas for improvement needed and you have introduced a clearly structured improvement plan. Leaders have already taken action to address some of the weaknesses in teaching. As a result, the quality of current pupils' learning is improving and pupils' attainment is beginning to improve. However, pupils' progress in writing has not improved. Pupils do not make as much progress as they should across the school in writing, as well as in mathematics.

You have established a clear vision for the school and a shared sense of urgency among staff about the need to very quickly improve the school's work. Together, with governors, you have sought the help necessary to support your leadership and develop the quality of teaching at the school. Leaders recognise that, in the words of your school vision, 'we all start small and end up big'. This has galvanised the community to raise the aspirations of both staff and pupils. Consequently, there is now a tangible team spirit.

Teesville Primary School is a happy, vibrant community. The pupils are confident, enthusiastic and keen to learn. The vast majority enjoy coming to school. They work well together. They are well-mannered and respectful. You are clear with parents and pupils about the importance of good attendance. You celebrate attendance with pupils and have recently begun to work more closely with parents and carers to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. However, the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is above the national average. Leaders need to continue to challenge and support parents to improve this.

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to raise standards and rates of pupils' progress in mathematics by ensuring that teaching offered appropriate challenge, pace and engagement for the most able and middle-attaining pupils. At that time, standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6 were reported as average. In recent years, pupils' progress in mathematics in key stage 2 has remained variable. In 2018, the school focused upon improving pupils' achievement in mathematics in key stage 2. With support from the learning trust, you ensured that teachers received additional training to refocus their work. This is helping to raise standards of attainment. In Year 6 in 2018, for example, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard was much higher than average. Although pupils' rate of progress also improved, progress was still not consistently good and so a below-average proportion of pupils achieved the higher standard. Leaders, including governors, are clear that the actions taken since the last inspection have not yet increased pupils' progress in key stage 2 in mathematics enough. Doing so is an important next step.

Governors recognised the need to improve their effectiveness and sought the support of a national leader of governance. They know that, in the past, the challenge and support that they offered to school leaders was not sufficient to improve the school. However, over the last 12 months, governors have refocused their work, undertaken in-depth training and gained a clearer picture of the strengths and weaknesses of leadership and teaching. As a result, they are able to more rigorously hold leaders to account and ensure improving outcomes for pupils. Governors are firmly committed to the school and are determined to ensure pupils' future success.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding and have ensured that safeguarding procedures to make sure pupils are safe are fit for purpose. However, the monitoring and oversight of safeguarding checks on adults have not been thorough enough. At the start of the inspection, I found that some aspects of the legal checks on teaching staff were incomplete. You responded immediately and with the help of the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Iris Learning Trust, ensured that these were completed in full during the inspection.

Leaders make sure that staff are appropriately trained so they can identify and respond swiftly to any concerns. You have developed effective working relationships and use external agencies successfully to support the school's work. Leaders are not afraid to challenge agencies where they consider that they are not taking the

necessary action to protect vulnerable pupils.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and are confident in reporting concerns to any adult. They speak very positively about how they are taught to stay safe, including when using the internet or social media. Pupils have a good knowledge of the different types of bullying. They say that sometimes other pupils can be unkind or say hurtful things, but they do not believe that bullying is a problem in the school. They were very confident that adults always respond to and challenge bullying and poor behaviour.

Inspection findings

- There was a buzz of purposeful activity when we visited the Nursery. Children were completely engaged as they played in the various areas, including dressing-up and sand-based activities. Children were keen to point out 'the little pigs' house' and to tell me that 'there are three little pigs, but you can't blow the house down'. Staff actively support children's social development, encouraging them to share and take turns. They take every opportunity to engage children in conversation and to extend their vocabulary.
- In the Reception class, children were completely captivated by the teacher's reading of a story. Children were able to explain that an author writes the story, an illustrator draws pictures and that the 'blurb on the back tells you what the story is about'. Despite evident strengths in early years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of their Reception year has been variable since the last inspection. You have taken action to address this and in 2018 the proportion rose to above the national average. However, the proportion of boys achieving a good level of development was well below average. This does not represent consistently good progress from children's starting points. Improvements to early years provision are now underway, although these need embedding in practice.
- Strong teaching of phonics in the early years means that typically children make a good start in developing their literacy skills and this continues into key stage 1. In the Year 1 class we visited, adults modelled a variety of sounds including 'ou', 'ea' and 'ure'. Another group were identifying and sounding out different words such as 'game', 'time', 'snake' and 'note'. However, the quality of the teaching of phonics is inconsistent. As a result, the proportion of children achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check over the last three years has been below average.
- Other work that you have undertaken to improve the quality of the teaching of reading is a real strength. The time invested in training staff and ensuring that they have a clear understanding of how to effectively teach pupils to read, including the skills of inference and deduction, had a significant impact on Year 6 pupils' progress. In 2018, at the end of key stage 2, pupils' progress in reading improved considerably and was above average and pupils' attainment was high.
- As a result of support and training in writing, including the introduction of a strategy that you call 'warm up the words', pupils are attaining higher standards in writing than they have done historically. Year 4 pupils were able to tell me how

they could use the words that they have learned to write about life in the Roman city of Pompeii. However, teachers do not consistently follow the school's approach to teaching writing. This inconsistency hinders pupils' progress. Consequently, although in 2018 pupils' key stage 2 attainment in writing was above average, pupils did not make good progress. In particular, too few pupils reached the higher standard.

- Pupils spoke enthusiastically about mathematics. Many of the pupils that I spoke to said it was their favourite subject. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers are now providing tasks which are beginning to challenge and extend pupils' learning in mathematics more effectively. However, their work also shows that teaching does not enable pupils to apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving and reasoning well enough. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 is below average.
- Overall, staff and pupils are positive about the school and feel that it is improving. The vast majority of parents spoken to during the inspection and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were positive about the school. They are supportive of the new leadership and are appreciative of how approachable and accessible you are. However, there remain a few parents who are unhappy with the school. Other parents, however, were positive. One parent commented, 'This school has changed my child's life!' Another parent captured the views of many, saying, 'I am very supportive of Teesville and under the lead of Mrs Ashman and Mrs Weston the school has seen many positive improvements'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to embed the improvements in the early years so that a greater proportion of children, especially boys, achieve a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year
- all legal safeguarding checks are routinely carried out and records are effectively monitored and updated
- the school's approach to the teaching of phonics is improved, leading to an increased proportion of pupils meeting the standard expected in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 1
- the proportion of pupils at both key stages 1 and 2 who reach the higher standard in writing and mathematics increases
- they continue to challenge and support parents of pupils who do not attend school regularly.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Murray
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and, at your request, the CEO of the Iris Learning Trust attended our meeting. I met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also met with your early years leader. Together with you, I visited classrooms to observe teaching and learning and to look at pupils' work. I also looked in depth at pupils' writing books, mathematics books and other work. I met with a representative of the local authority. I met with a group of pupils from Years 3 to 6. I listened to eight pupils read. I also listened informally to pupils read during my visits to lessons. Consideration was given to the 19 free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 23 questionnaire responses from staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. I spoke to several parents at the start of the school day. I evaluated recent information in relation to pupils' progress throughout the school, the school's self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan and a sample of monitoring records. I also met with you as designated safeguarding leader and reviewed documentation and records about how you keep your pupils safe.