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Ms Tracy Johnson  
Acting Headteacher  
Forest View Primary  
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Dear Ms Johnson

### **Short inspection of Forest View Primary**

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 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 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following the recent retirement of the previous headteacher, you have successfully supported the school through a period of uncertainty and instability. You have managed many staff absences effectively to ensure that there is minimal impact on the quality of teaching in school. You have been well assisted by the dedicated acting deputy headteacher, whose talents complement your own. Working alongside a supportive governing body, your skilful leadership has brought about improvements to teaching and learning. Your self-evaluation processes are detailed. You, together with the acting deputy headteacher, have an accurate view of the school's overall effectiveness. Your new development plans are sharply focused. Priorities for improvement are well chosen and clear.

As a result of your hard work and conscientious leadership, standards in the school show improvement and morale is high among staff and pupils. You have managed, and continue to manage, significant changes to leadership and staffing. You do so sensitively and with a calm manner. You have supported leaders to take full responsibility for their subjects. They have embraced the challenge and are working with enthusiasm to improve provision. You, together with the acting deputy headteacher, have created an ethos of continuous development among your staff.

In order to improve pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics further, you have already started to focus on these areas to ensure that pupils are set appropriately challenging work. You have invested in high-quality training to support staff to improve and share their practice. As a result, the quality of teaching across

the school is securely good. Teaching is characterised by strong and purposeful relationships. Teachers' planning is well structured, and the use of high-quality assessments has enabled pupils' needs to be more readily met. As a result, pupils' progress and attainment across the school are improving. You are committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve their very best.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are impeccable. They treat each other, staff and visitors with the utmost care and respect. They behave exceptionally well in class and around the school during break and lunchtime. Pupils are proud of their achievements and enjoy talking about their work. One pupil said, 'School is a happy place; it is exciting and fun.' Pupils support each other with their learning and in their play. You, fully supported by your whole staff team, encourage strong values in pupils, such as respect, tolerance and the importance of caring about each other. This prepares pupils exceptionally well for the future.

You, together with the acting deputy headteacher, have refined many strategies to encourage and celebrate pupils' regular and punctual attendance. The 'Don't be off' shop, with its many prizes, has already supported better attendance and punctuality.

Staff, parents, pupils and governors are supportive of you and the changes you have made. Parents are overwhelmingly positive. They appreciate that you are always available to talk with them. They value the care and support you and your team provide. Relationships are a significant strength within the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. For example, comprehensive checks are made so that adults working in the school are safe to do so. Staff and governor safeguarding training is up to date. An analysis of your records shows that you are swift to access support and guidance from other agencies to help you in your role as designated safeguarding lead. You have recently refined your recording systems further, moving onto an electronic system, so that related documents can be more easily accessed. All staff are vigilant and quick to raise any issues or concerns. As a result, the school fosters a safe and caring environment.

The school is a vibrant and happy place to learn. The curriculum supports pupils well in maintaining their own safety. Pupils are knowledgeable about keeping safe online and how to stay safe outside of school. They are able to discuss issues such as road safety and 'stranger danger' confidently. Pupils who spoke to me told me that there were no unsafe places in school. They said that bullying and poor behaviour are rare. They are confident that if they ever have a problem, a member of staff will quickly help them to deal with it. Pupils have full trust in their teachers and teaching assistants who look after them.

### **Inspection findings**

- An area that I explored during the inspection was how leaders' actions were improving and securing more consistent outcomes for pupils. Over time, the

proportions of pupils who reach the expected standards and the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics have fluctuated and have often been lower than the national average. Strong teaching throughout school, work in pupils' books and current pupils' assessment information indicate that pupils are now making better progress. A challenge for the school will be to sustain these recent marked improvements.

- Your work to improve reading rapidly across the school is paying dividends. Since last September, new approaches to the teaching of reading have been put in place. These are giving pupils more opportunities to develop their retrieval, inference and deduction skills. Pupils are increasingly confident in dealing with, and using vocabulary across a wide range of subjects. While listening to pupils read, I was impressed by their developing fluency and their systematic use of phonic skills to attempt words that they find tricky. All of this is contributing to pupils' improved levels of attainment in reading. The vast majority of pupils have a secure understanding of phonics due to effective teaching.
- Over time, the school has worked successfully on the areas of concern identified in the previous inspection, to develop teachers' questioning skills and raise their expectations. All staff ask probing questions effectively to encourage children to think deeply about their learning. You have worked well with staff to increase their expectations and they are now beginning to provide greater challenge to pupils. However, the most able pupils still require further challenge.
- Next, I wanted to establish what leaders were doing to ensure that children in the early years have every opportunity to achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception. A large proportion of children enter the early years with starting points below those typical for their age. However, you and your early years leader do not see this as a barrier. Together, you are determined to ensure that each child makes good progress. The early years leader has a strong understanding of how young children learn. She accurately assesses children's abilities when they start school. Her strong direction, to a relatively new team, has created a vibrant, language-rich environment in which children flourish. Any gaps in children's knowledge and skills that exist are quickly identified and acted upon. As a result, the proportion of children, including disadvantaged children, reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception is improving, and in 2018 this was in line with the national average.
- Another focus for this inspection was to review the impact of the additional spending for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders conduct regular progress meetings to review the progress of every pupil. Any pupil showing signs of falling behind in their learning is quickly identified and a raft of interventions or additional support is then put in place. Because assessment systems have not, until recently, been sufficiently reliable, governors have struggled to hold leaders to account regarding the effective use of the pupil premium grant. This has been because they found it hard to judge how much progress had been made during support programmes. Work in disadvantaged pupils' books, during the inspection, particularly in writing and mathematics, demonstrates that pupils' achievement is strongly improving.

- The newly appointed SEND coordinator (SENCo) is passionate in her role and has a clear desire to improve the provision. You continue to provide quality guidance and training to help her in this new position. She is beginning to gain a better understanding of the interventions which are used across the school. The SENCo is working closely with staff to ensure that these interventions happen regularly. Her knowledge of pupils' progress and her evaluation of the quality of interventions are beginning to develop. New refined assessment procedures to measure the effectiveness of these interventions are under development. Work in pupils' books shows that standards are improving. However, you, other leaders and governors agree that current standards for pupils with SEND need to be more consistently sustained over time.
- Leadership continues to strengthen as you have made more effective use of middle leaders. You have successfully defined roles and responsibilities for staff, who remarked that they feel very well supported. You have developed their skills and confidence to enable them to bring about improvements in their subjects. However, their roles still need further development, as leaders have limited opportunities to evaluate the impact of their actions. Likewise, governance has undergone a period of instability, with a number of recent new appointments. It is clear that governors are fully committed to support improvement. Their ambition to ensure that they get the best for the school is evident in their rigorous approach to appointing a new headteacher. However, the number of new, inexperienced governors means that their capacity to support and challenge leaders is limited. For example, they accept that they need to be more rigorous in checking pupils' rates of progress.
- Finally, I was keen to review leaders' procedures for managing pupils' absence. The school's attendance figures are broadly average but the proportion of pupils who miss too many school days is above the national average. I checked current rates of attendance across the school and these show that there has been an improvement for all pupils. This is because the various procedures you put into action when a pupil is absent are working. It was also pleasing to note that more pupils are now arriving to school on time. The new 'Don't be off' shop is incredibly popular with pupils and has greatly contributed to improved attendance.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers build upon recent improvements in the quality of teaching, so that all pupils, especially the most able, are sufficiently challenged, to increase the proportions who attain the higher standards
- current assessment systems are further refined and fully embedded so that there is accurate information by which to judge the effectiveness of support and intervention programmes for pupils with SEND
- the roles of middle leaders and governors are developed further, so that they better evaluate the school's effectiveness.

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

Alison Stephenson  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this one-day inspection, I met with you and the acting deputy headteacher, the early years leader, the SENCo, a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority. I also met with a group of pupils and listened to some of them read. Together, you and I visited lessons to look at the quality of teaching. During the lessons, I reviewed a sample of pupils' books and talked to pupils about their learning and progress. We observed pupils' behaviour at break and at social times. I reviewed 10 responses to the staff questionnaire, 18 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's own survey of parents' opinions. I looked closely at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. I examined the school's monitoring records and assessment information about current pupils' progress and attainment. The school's website was also carefully scrutinised.