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Mrs Karen Field  
Headteacher  
Seaview Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Field

### **Short inspection of Seaview Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 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 under your leadership in February 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders have identified the right priorities for improvement. The school improvement plan includes sharp timescales and targets against which governors hold leaders to account. You have written leadership documents that are meticulous in their detail and high in quality. Governors have ensured that the school's finances are properly managed in delivering the improvement plan. Governors' business skills help them to challenge your spending decisions appropriately.

You have built a very skilled and united senior leadership team of dedicated professionals. The leadership team has effectively addressed the challenge set following the last inspection to share good practice more widely. Subject leaders work alongside teachers and teaching assistants to help them improve their subject knowledge and teaching methods. This means that there is a completely consistent approach to implementing school policies, procedures, teaching and assessment methods. Consistency is a hallmark of this school. There is an experienced, happy and stable staff, with low staff turnover, so teachers and teaching assistants know each other and the pupils and families well. Morale is high.

Parents and carers value the fact that the staff are so approachable. Many parents, and even grandparents, told me that they were pupils at this school themselves, and that this school is at the heart of the community. One parent said, 'The pastoral care shown by all of the staff, from the headteacher to the teachers, teaching

assistants and all other staff is second to none.'

Some pupils have social and emotional needs that make it difficult for them to control their behaviour sometimes. The teachers and teaching assistants are skilful in making sure that these pupils are settled, calm and ready for learning. One parent said, 'This school is very inclusive and should be commended for their patience, humour and perseverance to providing an excellent education for all.'

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are well trained and know the signs to look out for that would raise concerns. There is a strong culture of safeguarding.

Leaders have recently introduced a safeguarding space on the school's social media platforms that link parents to national guidance about helping their children stay safe online. School computers are available for families if they do not have computers or internet access at home.

Senior leaders keep detailed records of notes of meetings for pupils who need extra help and protection. Leaders work closely with partner agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Leaders ask pupils what they think before attending meetings with colleagues from various agencies to make sure that pupils' wishes and feelings are shared and considered by adults.

Leaders have taken effective steps to reduce the numbers of pupils who are persistently absent. Leaders are well trained and understand the risks to absent pupils of criminal exploitation. Leaders are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are kept safe even when they are absent.

### **Inspection findings**

- There are positive and nurturing relationships between adults and children in the early years. A large proportion of children enter Nursery and Reception with speech and language skills that are below the typical expectation for their age. The early years garden is rich with enticing activities that draw children into practising their letters, sounds and numbers when they are playing. Adults are skilful in improving children's communication, language and literacy skills quickly.
- The teaching of early reading is good. Governors have invested in additional adults to keep class sizes small, so early readers are given lots of individual help in small phonics and reading groups. The school is consistent in the use of one phonics scheme that is followed systematically. Reading books are well matched to pupils' phonics skills and knowledge so that pupils are quickly gaining fluency and confidence in reading.
- English and mathematics leaders have introduced some new approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection. These new ideas are starting to improve pupils' achievement. In the 2018 tests, the progress that Year 6 pupils had made across key stage 2 was much better than the progress of other Year 6 pupils nationally.

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good or better. Most pupils are making progress in reading, writing and mathematics that is at least good. The progress that the most able pupils make is improving, but it is not yet good enough.
- Leaders have been less successful in ensuring that there is enough challenge in English and mathematics lessons for the most able pupils. This is a target in the school improvement plan, and all teachers know that they need to improve this aspect of their work. Leaders' recent monitoring records showed that leaders have noticed that some teachers are still giving the most able pupils work that is too easy. I noticed that this was happening in some of the English and mathematics lessons that we observed together.
- In 2015, Ofsted inspectors challenged leaders to make sure that pupils have frequent chances to practise their literacy and numeracy skills across the wider curriculum. There is lots of evidence that this is happening in pupils' work now. This is helping pupils to make even better progress in English and mathematics.
- Leaders have focused on improving the teaching of writing in recent years and even the youngest children now have accurate letter formation. Children in Reception, and pupils in Year 1, enjoy phonics lessons and they are making good progress. In Reception, children's early writing is legible as they can form their letters correctly. The children can spell simple words and make a sensible guess when spelling less-familiar words.
- Older pupils write skilfully across a range of genres. Teachers' subject knowledge in the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation and pupils take pride in their work. All teachers follow the school's assessment and feedback policy. The standard of key stage 2 pupils' writing is high.
- Teachers give pupils the opportunity to practise applying their grammar skills in their writing. Pupils say they find this more interesting than repeating grammar exercises. For example, having learned about comparative conjunctions and fronted adverbials, we observed Year 6 pupils writing persuasive letters about the dangers of screen addiction. One pupil wrote: 'Resulting in a severe lack of concentration, screen addiction is luring people to sit in front of a perilous screen for hours on end. Likewise, it is taking over their sleep.' Leaders' own assessment records show that they expect a greater proportion of Year 6 pupils to achieve the higher standard in the 2018 key stage 2 writing assessment.
- Teachers' and teaching assistants' mathematics subject knowledge is good and they use mathematical language precisely. Pupils can make links between different areas of the curriculum, such as between fractions, decimals and percentages. There are now more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills to reasoning. This is helping most pupils to make good progress in mathematics.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to increase the level of challenge in English and mathematics lessons for the most able pupils in all year groups.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracey Ralph  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection you and I observed lessons together in every year group, including phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1. Our main focus in key stage 1 was the teaching of English, but we did observe some mathematics teaching in the early years and in key stage 2. Pupils' work in all year groups and in all subjects was scrutinised alongside senior leaders. I also heard several pupils read their reading books, and I spoke with pupils informally in the dining hall.

Meetings were held with you, the English and mathematics subject leaders and the upper key stage 2 leader. The deputy headteacher met with me to discuss attainment and progress of children within the early years. I also met members of the office team and the attendance officer to discuss pupil absence safeguarding procedures. A group of four governors met with me, and telephone conversations were held with the Durham education development partner and a leadership consultant who is regularly commissioned by governors.

Various documents were evaluated, including the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation document, local authority reports, governors' meeting minutes and the school's monitoring records. Safeguarding documents and electronic records were reviewed. There were no responses to Ofsted's questionnaires from staff or pupils. The 19 responses by parents to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, were also taken into account, along with comments made personally to me by several parents bringing their children to school at the start of the day.