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Mrs Helen Murray
Headteacher
Thornton Cleveleys Royles Brook Primary School
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Dear Mrs Murray

Short inspection of Thornton Cleveleys Royles Brook Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 April 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 April 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school has faced some significant challenges in recent months, including staffing issues and extensive flooding. However, ably supported by your deputy headteacher, you have demonstrated a resilience and determination that have allowed the school to continue to operate smoothly.

You have a clear understanding of the school's strengths. This is because you and the deputy headteacher meticulously monitor the quality of teaching across the school. As a result, teaching is good and progress is strong. Curriculum leaders are beginning to develop their roles. They have been given a range of training to help them lead their subject, particularly leaders of English and mathematics. In other subjects, leaders know their subject well and are starting to plan for improvements. However, the implementation of change in these subjects is at an early stage and it is too early to see the impact on the quality of teaching.

Leaders and managers, including governors, have a good understanding of the community they serve. The school is extremely welcoming, and pupils are nurtured and cared for. You are well aware that some of your pupils are vulnerable and that some families require support. The family support worker engages effectively with these families and relationships with parents are strong. The behaviour of pupils is consistently good. They are extremely polite and well-mannered and are clearly proud of their school. Pupils say that everyone gets along with others and relationships are strong.

The majority of parents are supportive of the work of the school and would recommend the school to other parents. One typical comment included, 'overall I am extremely happy with the school and only have positive praise.' You are aware that some parents are concerned that communication between school and home could be improved and you have plans in place to address this.

You have addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Firstly, you were asked to improve standards of writing for the most able pupils. Pupils are supported effectively by teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils are given more opportunities to write at length and the presentation of pupils' work has improved; consequently, pupils are making strong progress across the school.

You were also asked to extend opportunities for creative development in the early years. You have successfully overhauled provision in early years. The classrooms have been transformed to ensure that pupils can access a range of learning opportunities. Expectations are high and children demonstrate high levels of independence, creativity and resilience; consequently, children get off to a good start and make strong progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You lead by example and ensure that all staff are vigilant to safeguarding issues in school. You and other leaders have a very good understanding of the needs of vulnerable families and are tenacious in ensuring that these families get the support they require from a range of services. Staff are well trained and know what their role is in keeping pupils safe and what to do if they are concerned about a child. The arrangements you have for appointing staff, governors and volunteers are robust and regular checks are made to make sure that all adults are suitable to work with children.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They are very aware that the building and playground are safe and confident that all adults in school will keep them safe. They say that bullying is rare and if it happens it would be dealt with effectively. Older pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe on the internet and when they are using social media.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of lines of enquiry. The first looked at the teaching of writing across the school and the progress of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). You were rightly disappointed with the progress some pupils made in key stage 2 in 2018. You took prompt action by raising teachers' expectations of pupils' achievements. Teachers provide far more opportunities for pupils to write at length in a range of subjects. Better teaching means pupils use of sentence structure, punctuation and vocabulary are effective and as a result the quality of pupils' writing has improved. Teachers ensure that disadvantaged pupils and

those with SEND receive appropriate and timely support with their writing, and consequently these pupils make good progress.

- The next line of enquiry looked at attendance. Leaders are clearly focused on improving attendance. Individual attendance is checked regularly, and parents are informed of any issues. You identified that a number of pupils with SEND were persistently absent. Good relationships with families were established and improvements in attendance have been made quickly. The attendance of pupils with SEND has improved significantly over the last year and is now higher than the national average.
- Next, I looked at the quality of the curriculum, beyond English and mathematics. There is a mixed picture across the school in terms of the quality in each subject. Themed weeks, such as the recent history week, allow pupils to learn a range of skills and knowledge. For example, in art pupils made Stone Age weapons from clay and in design-technology created Anglo Saxon homes. In addition, pupils are given greater opportunities to undertake science experiments and investigations. However, work in pupils' books, particularly in history and geography, lacks detail and teaching of skills and knowledge is often superficial. Expectations of what pupils can achieve in these subjects are not high enough.
- Finally, I looked at the quality of teaching in mathematics and the progress pupils, and particularly girls, make. Pupils are taught mathematics every day and lessons cover a wide range of content. In particular, arithmetic is taught effectively, pupils are given many opportunities to practise arithmetic skills. Current school assessment information and work in pupils' books show good progress for boys and girls. However, the opportunities that are given to pupils to use reasoning skills are not as well developed. A recent initiative to include more reasoning opportunities in lessons is yet to bear fruit and is not yet fully embedded.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more opportunities are given to pupils to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics
- expectations of what pupils can achieve in history and geography are high enough.

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

Yours sincerely

Emma Jackson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, middle leaders and members of the governing body. I spoke to a representative of the local authority and I talked with pupils in a meeting and in classrooms. I took account of 62 responses to the online questionnaire for parents. I visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning and looked at their work in books. I reviewed information about pupils' progress and attainment. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation document and looked at the minutes of governors' meetings. I looked at safeguarding and evaluated the impact of the school's procedures and policies to keep pupils safe.