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Mr Lee Gallon
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Dear Mr Gallon

Short inspection of Cheviot Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 May 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 December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Your inspirational leadership as executive headteacher and that of your head of school clearly show an unwavering determination to provide the very best for all pupils. Your passion, commitment and thorough knowledge of what makes excellent teaching and learning have enthused staff to provide exciting opportunities for pupils to be the best they can be. Leaders are quietly confident and challenge their own judgements about the effectiveness of the school through moderation, observation and external scrutiny. As a result, the school continues to improve its provision for pupils.

As a result of leaders' promotion of equality and diversity, pupils are caring, considerate, respectful and tolerant of each other and the wider community. The school is a vibrant and exciting place to be. Interactions between adults and pupils are invariably positive. Staff treat pupils with respect, allowing them to make choices and take control wherever possible.

Leadership of early years is strong. Provision has improved in early years and both

the outdoor and indoor areas are vibrant and exciting. Children do well because of the high expectations of the leader to provide an excellent learning environment. This also applies for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The early years leader and the lead for special educational needs know their pupils well and provide bespoke and appropriate support to teachers and pupils. They share a dogged determination to ensure that all pupils do well. As a result, children in early years make good progress, as do those across the school with SEND.

Governance is strong. Governors have supported and challenged the school in equal measure. They expect the best of leaders and share leaders' 'can-do' attitude. More recently, new governors have further strengthened the board and have ensured that the school extends its influence within the academy trust in a structured and well-managed way.

With regard to how well pupils achieve, the published assessment information for your school shows that all pupils make good progress and outcomes for pupils are good and improving in line with national expectations. The focused work you have put in place to support pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils has shown a significant improvement. The achievement and progress of these groups of pupils are as strong as for all groups in the school.

The vast majority of parents and carers spoken to during the inspection, and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, commented positively about the care that you give to their children. They are also pleased with the information that they receive about their child's learning. One parent's comment represented the views of many, in saying, 'I couldn't wish for better support.' Pupils enjoy coming to school. They appreciate the many opportunities that you provide to enrich and enhance their learning through topics and activities. Those spoken to during the inspection were enthusiastic about their learning, especially in mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

The culture for safeguarding pupils is a strength of the school and all safeguarding arrangements are effective and fit for purpose. Staff follow procedures appropriately and any concerns are followed up rigorously. Records are exemplary, being detailed and of high quality. You have a strong safeguarding focus which ensures that there is the capacity to deal swiftly and effectively with safeguarding issues. To these ends, you have acted with tenacity to protect and support pupils, for example in cases of domestic abuse.

Pupils feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. Pupils appreciate the roles played by all adults in school to keep them safe. Pupils say that if they are worried about anything, there is always someone to talk to in school. They are confident that things will be dealt with swiftly. Pupils talked about bullying protocols, and understanding the difference between 'falling out' and bullying. They also understood the potential dangers in the wider community and are well prepared by the school. Pupils enjoy school. The focus on 'Get up, Get in, Get on' has made a significant

impact on improving attendance and punctuality. There are meticulous and effective systems for monitoring absence. Good attendance is rewarded and has a high profile in school. Persistent absence in school is below that for other pupils nationally and overall attendance is similar to the national average. The few pupils that are persistently absent are given appropriate support which ensures that they are soon back on track.

Inspection findings

- I wanted to look at how you are improving pupils' progress in reading to match their good progress in writing and mathematics. I found that the introduction over the past two years of pupils reading whole books is now showing a marked improvement in pupils' reading skills across the school.
- Phonics is taught well. The systematic teaching of letters and sounds in early years is now well embedded and provides a good starting point for reading skills. We saw children in Reception learning new sounds and letter combinations and then using this skill in new words they had learned. Their knowledge was further developed by writing a 'wanted poster' to help find Malcolm the missing duckling. Children were using and applying their skills well.
- Pupils read with confidence and pleasure. The systematic focus on reading for pleasure and purpose means that most pupils typically reach the expected standard at the end of Year 1. They continue to reach expected standards throughout key stages 1 and 2. When I listened to several pupils read, they were not only able to read fluently, but were also able to discuss what they thought might happen in the story.
- Pupils in the school show good reading and writing skills and are gaining in confidence, understanding how reading and writing link together. The newly refurbished library is a well-used resource. When I looked in pupils' books, writing was lively and interesting because pupils were using good reading to model good writing. However, we agreed that in other subjects in the curriculum, there were not enough opportunities for pupils to write at greater depth.
- The previous inspection asked you to improve the quality of teaching and learning. I wanted to look at what you have done to achieve this. The school rightly prides itself on the learning opportunities it provides for staff. They are encouraged to read widely and discuss and debate all aspects of teaching and learning with their colleagues. The comprehensive training for staff has resulted in improvements to teaching. All teaching in the school is consistently good, with much that is outstanding.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is thorough. Senior leaders are adept at fostering the abilities and talents of staff by offering continual 'in the moment' opportunities to refine their practice, for example through impromptu 'drop-ins' to lessons. This has been particularly effective in rapidly developing the skills of new teachers and maintaining consistency of classroom approach and high expectations. As a result, teachers are highly reflective and relish chances to hone their skills. All of this support contributes greatly to the outstanding practice of many of your teachers and the very strong outcomes attained by pupils, including

disadvantaged pupils. We did agree that pupils now need to develop independent skills in their learning and build on their confidence to find out things on their own.

- The third area I looked at was how you have developed all your middle leaders in monitoring their areas of responsibility and improving outcomes for pupils. Middle leaders are encouraged to play an active role in the school's success as team leaders both for subject areas and key stages. They are held accountable for the learning and achievement of every pupil across their areas of responsibility and work closely with teachers and support staff. They meet regularly with their team to reflect on the lessons and together adapt plans for future learning. This ensures that pupils' needs and next steps in learning are constantly reviewed.
- All middle leaders comprehensively gather assessment information which is used to discuss pupils' learning with teachers. Teachers' assessments are used effectively to precisely pinpoint opportunities to move pupils on in their learning. This is evident for all groups of pupils, but especially for disadvantaged pupils and those that are struggling and need help to catch up. All pupils in the school do equally well.
- My fourth area to investigate looked at the curriculum and the impact it has on improving pupils' attendance. Your curriculum is highly engaging to pupils. Indeed, in the lessons I observed, pupils worked well together, had pride in their work and were keen to share with me what they had learned. Pupils in Year 4 told me they were investigating climate change and were able to explain some of the reasons for it and the impact on the environment. There are plenty of opportunities within the curriculum to broaden pupils' experience through visits outside school and visitors to school. Pupils talked enthusiastically about a trip to the Centre for Life in Newcastle.
- Attendance for all pupils has improved and is currently at 96.3%, which is at the national average. There is a relentless focus on attending, working hard and doing your best. Pupils relish the challenges set by their teachers and especially like the 'Chilli Challenge' in mathematics. The engagement and fun in the curriculum mean that pupils enjoy coming to school and as one pupil said, 'we learn loads in a fun and exciting way'.
- Finally, we looked at how pupils behave in school and how well they self-regulate their own behaviour. Behaviour in classes and around the school is excellent. Pupils are courteous and polite. They welcome visitors and are interested in talking to them. At playtime and lunchtime, pupils are kind and helpful to each other, often sharing games and supporting each other. The school is calm and orderly and pupils are rightly proud of their school. Many spoke to me during the inspection and wanted to share how much they like the school and staff. They were able to tell me why good behaviour is important and one pupil said, 'I sometimes struggle with being good, but my friends have helped me. I'm really good now'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that pupils:

- are given further opportunities to develop and use independent skills in learning to find out things for themselves across a range of subjects
- continue to write at greater depth in foundation subjects so that it matches the quality of writing in English.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Newcastle-upon-Tyne. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jen Cave
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, I met with you, your head of school and members of your leadership team. I also met four members of the governing body and the acting chief executive officer and the vice-chair from the trust. I visited all classrooms at the beginning of the day, and spoke to pupils at breaks and lunchtime as well as in classes. I also listened to a number of pupils read. I met with a group of pupils during the day and I spoke with several parents at the start of the school day. I also met with staff, conducted a scrutiny of pupils' work with leaders in English and mathematics, and spoke at length to the leader for special educational needs and the leader for safeguarding. I reviewed the 29 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. I scrutinised attendance data, your assessment information, school improvement planning, self-evaluation, the record of security checks on staff, and other safeguarding documentation, procedures and practices.