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Miss Tracy Clarvis  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Clarvis

### **Short inspection of Ormesby Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 15 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in September 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 the predecessor school was last inspected, there has been some inconsistency in pupils' outcomes, with pupils' progress below average in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2018. At the school's previous inspection, the school was asked to provide more challenge for the most able pupils. However, the proportions of pupils working at greater depths of understanding have remained below average at key stage 2, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. In contrast, overall standards at key stage 1 have been broadly in line with those seen nationally, while children in the early years are making increasingly strong progress from their starting points.

Despite these fluctuations in outcomes, you and your team are working positively to improve standards. You know your school well and are taking concerted action to build improvement. With colleagues in the Ironstone Trust, you established a rapid action group to provide additional support and check the effect of improvement strategies. This group meets on a regular basis to check the pace of improvement. Your subject leaders for English and mathematics have worked with subject specialists and colleagues from across the trust to develop their expertise. They have then shared their new insights with colleagues across different phases to implement changes across the school.

You have strengthened the momentum for change by ensuring that subject leaders and phase leaders are keenly involved in the improvement process. You have given subject leaders additional time to visit classrooms and see the effects of whole-school reading and mathematics initiatives. You have recognised that for change to gain traction, it needs to be coordinated from the early years through to Year 6. Phase leaders provide regular updates on the progress of pupils in their phase to you, trust leaders and members of the local governing body. Your governors have a good understanding of improvement priorities, although they are not always as sharply aware of the effects of additional funding.

You are open to scrutiny and keen to secure additional insights on the school's work. You have commissioned support from additional consultants to look at the impact of changes to teaching in reading and writing. Your teachers work with colleagues from other schools to check standards and the accuracy of assessment. This work has helped teachers to develop a much clearer awareness of what pupils can achieve. In the classrooms, and through additional intervention work, teachers are using their knowledge of pupils' previous understanding to pitch work that is beginning to support stronger progress. These actions are building momentum for improvement across many important areas.

You and your team have maintained a positive ethos at the school. In lesson visits and in meetings, pupils were polite and talked enthusiastically about many aspects of school life. They talked with insight about new approaches to reading and about additional clubs and activities that enrich their school experience. In lessons, pupils worked with focus and attention, although a small number of pupils and parents did express concerns over some aspects of bullying and behaviour. Overall, pupils value their learning and the support they receive from their teachers.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders carry out thorough checks on the suitability of adults working on site. Leaders ensure that staff are kept up to date with safeguarding issues and keep records of safeguarding training. Leaders and governors carry out monthly audits of safeguarding practice and regular checks on health and safety. Leaders respond promptly to any concerns over pupils' welfare and record these concerns thoroughly. Leaders work with the school's own counsellors to provide additional care and support for pupils.

The large majority of pupils who the inspector talked to or who expressed views in questionnaires say that they feel safe in school. Pupils explore safeguarding issues in school and could talk clearly about the actions they could take to keep safe online and to avoid the potential threats posed by strangers.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders have established a whole-school focus on reading to address the weaker progress made by pupils in 2018. They have introduced new procedures from the

early years to Year 6 to secure consistent practice. Pupils now read for longer periods of time and more consideration is given to the books they read. Teachers use formal prompts to help pupils to explore the meaning of their books more deeply. Pupils say that these strategies are helping them to read with better understanding. In pupils' guided-reading books, and in more formal assessment tasks, there is evidence that pupils are making stronger progress. In Year 4, pupils read to the inspector with clarity and expression, although for some pupils, books were not sufficiently challenging.

- In the early years, there are many signs that teachers and teaching assistants are developing children's love of reading effectively. In Nursery class, children listened attentively to an enthusiastic reading of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Teachers built upon children's previous reading and used questions deftly to help them remember key vocabulary, including less familiar words such as cocoon and salami. Children used their hands and fingers to signal to teaching assistants what 'tiny' and the number five meant. Children were eager and involved listeners whose understanding was keenly praised by their teachers.
- Leaders and teachers are working to improve pupils' progress in mathematics. Leaders have taken part in training and worked with colleagues across a local mathematics hub to develop their expertise. In Years 1 to 3, pupils are following a new 'mastery' curriculum to help them to develop a deeper understanding of arithmetic methods and how to apply them. In Years 4 to 6, leaders and teachers are placing greater emphasis upon pupils applying their reasoning to solve problems. Work in pupils' books shows that these new routines are being implemented more consistently, enabling pupils to make improving progress.
- In 2018, pupils' progress in writing at the end of key stage 2 was in line with that of other pupils nationally. Pupils have regular opportunities to write in different genres and are encouraged to use cursive handwriting from an early age. Pupils typically make good progress, although there is some variation in the proportions of pupils working at greater depth.
- In 2018, differences in progress and attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers increased at key stage 1 and key stage 2. Leaders have made this a priority for improvement. Senior leaders are reviewing the progress of disadvantaged pupils in greater depth and at more regular intervals. Phase leaders and teachers account for the progress of disadvantaged pupils in meetings with senior leaders and governors. Where appropriate, leaders have given disadvantaged pupils access to counselling to help them overcome possible barriers to learning. They have also supported access to trips and residential visits to build self-esteem and cultural capital. Although there are indications that disadvantaged pupils are making improving progress, differences in progress and attainment persist, particularly in the proportion of disadvantaged pupils working at higher standards of attainment.
- Over time, the proportion of pupils working at greater depths of understanding has been below that seen nationally. Leaders and teachers recognise this and are working together to raise expectations and the levels of challenge that pupils access. In some year groups, these approaches are beginning to yield improvement, but the picture is not consistent.

- Leaders have worked successfully to improve pupils' attendance. They have commissioned additional support to increase engagement with pupils and families. Leaders have raised the profile of good attendance with all parents and carers and raised attendance thresholds so that they intervene at an earlier stage when problems arise. They have balanced increasing support for families with firmer approaches when necessary. As a result of their actions, pupils' attendance has shown a marked improvement, while rates of persistent absence have significantly decreased.
- Leaders and teachers are currently revisiting the wider curriculum. Their aim is to increase the depth of subject knowledge that pupils acquire across a wider range of subjects. There are areas where positive practice is in place. Year 5 pupils lucidly explained the process of volcanic eruption and subsequent rock formation. In Year 6, pupils had completed some accomplished textiles work, influenced by patterns from Tudor garden design. However, pupils' overall experience of the wider curriculum is variable, with subjects such as history less developed. Pupils' access to subjects can be limited and does not enable them to build up knowledge and understanding in sufficient depth over time.
- Teachers do ensure that pupils' school life is enriched by a wide range of trips and visits. Pupils' understanding of their local areas has been enhanced by visits to local power stations, Captain Cook's birthplace and studies of industry on the River Tees. Their learning has been made more meaningful with visits to industrial museums and local farms. Trips to London and France have broadened pupils' horizons and built their self-confidence.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils are given consistent opportunities to work at greater depths of understanding across a wide range of subjects
- leaders improve the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils by closely checking the effect of additional funding and removing barriers to learning more effectively
- teachers enrich the knowledge and skills that pupil acquire through the wider curriculum.

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 Redcar and Cleveland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Kirtley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

As part of the inspection, I explored the actions that leaders were taking to improve pupils' progress in reading and mathematics. I also looked at the actions taken to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and to enable pupils to work at greater depths of understanding. In addition, I discussed initiatives to improve attendance.

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and subject leaders for English and mathematics. I also met key members of the attendance and pupil welfare team. I held a meeting with members of the governing body, two of whom were also trustees. I also met a group of pupils and discussed their learning with them in lessons. I held a meeting with the acting chief executive officer of the Ironstone Trust. I looked, with you, at learning in lessons. I also looked at pupils' work in books. I examined school improvement priorities and discussed pupils' progress. I looked at documents, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plan and behaviour and attendance records. I examined safeguarding documents, including the single central record. I considered the 16 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and the nine free-text responses from parents. I also considered the 43 responses to the pupil questionnaire and the 25 responses to the staff questionnaire.