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Mr Philip Pritchard  
Headteacher  
Jesmond Gardens Primary School  
Jesmond Gardens  
Hartlepool  
TS24 8PJ

Dear Mr Pritchard

### **Short inspection of Jesmond Gardens Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 November 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since your appointment in January 2018, you have provided ambitious and well-focused leadership which ensures that pupils develop strong personal skills and currently make good academic progress. Staff support the developments in school effectively and their morale is high. Along with your leaders and the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Stranton Academy Trust, you have an accurate view of the strengths and priorities for improvement to ensure the further development of the school. This is evident in the school's self-evaluation and well-tailored school development plan.

The strengths identified in pupils' behaviour found at the previous inspection were still clearly evident during this inspection. In lessons, there is a purposeful learning climate and relationships between staff and pupils, and pupils and their peers, are very positive. Consequently, pupils display determined and focused attitudes to work, both when working individually and in small groups. Playtimes offer a valuable experience for pupils. Staff supervise pupils effectively. Pupils have access to a range of activities, including organised games, or can socialise in quieter areas. Pupils' personal development and welfare are particularly important to you, your staff, trustees and governors. For example, the creation of the school inclusion team provides proactive support for any pupils who may need support to thrive personally or academically. Members of this team are well known to pupils, who told me they found the availability of this support reassuring and they understood how to access this should they need it.

The areas for improvement found at the previous inspection of your school have been addressed or are moving in the right direction. One area to improve was to develop the quality of teaching further. This is an ongoing focus for you and your staff. The introduction of a coaching approach, the use of external expertise and the sharing of effective practice across the trust's schools keep this at the forefront of your school improvement. Leaders receive appropriate training to assist them in leading improvements in the curriculum and quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility. Regular checking by a range of leaders ensures that improvements in the quality of teaching or where staff need additional support are identified promptly. All staff who responded to Ofsted's survey agree that leaders use professional development to encourage, challenge and support their improvement. Furthermore, staff also believe that leaders take into consideration their workload when introducing new policies and procedures.

The second area to improve was the standards of boys' writing. Overall, the school has made progress in addressing this aspect. In 2018, the proportion of boys leaving Reception who were working at the expected standard in writing was above the national average. Similarly, at the end of key stage 1, the proportions of pupils working at the expected standard and at greater depth in writing matched the national averages. However, while the proportion of boys achieving the expected standard in writing by the end of key stage 2 was close to the national average, the proportion working at a greater depth was below the national average. Leaders are staying focused on how to improve this aspect. For example, they plan to introduce a revised curriculum, better matched to pupils' needs, from September 2019.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders, staff, trustees and governors give a high priority to keeping pupils safe and there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders complete appropriate safeguarding checks for all staff, trustees, governors and volunteers to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Regular training ensures that staff know the school's safeguarding procedures and systems well and they take timely action to keep pupils safe. Leaders and staff have secure knowledge of safeguarding risks, such as county lines and extremism and radicalisation. Weekly meetings by the school's inclusion team, supported by the trust's inclusion leader, carefully check for any pupils who may be vulnerable. This team works in a forensic fashion and knows in detail the factors of vulnerability for pupils in the school. The school works very effectively with a range of agencies to secure the necessary support for pupils and their families where needed. All parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, believe that their child feels safe and happy at your school.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders, staff, trustees and governors hold an ambitious aim to provide the best learning opportunities and personal development for pupils attending your school. This year, you have revised your curriculum with the intention of better

meeting pupils' needs. Sensibly, you have trialled this through the summer term and are ready to launch the revised curriculum in September 2019.

- The trust's CEO and chair of the trustees have successfully identified where the school has needed support to further improve leadership skills and capacity, the quality of teaching, pupils' attendance and approaches to inclusion. Well-targeted support from within the other trust schools or beyond has had a positive effect in all these areas.
- Meetings with your subject leaders for English and mathematics demonstrate that they have a firm understanding of the priorities to further improve pupils' outcomes in their subject areas. They take relevant action to drive improvement and check the effect of their actions, using a range of approaches. Leaders across the school, including those new to their roles, receive relevant training and support to improve their leadership skills.
- Levels of challenge from governors are improving. For example, regular meetings of a member of the local governing body and the headteacher ensure that governors check where school improvement is 'on track' and where there is any slippage which leaders need to address. Similarly, there is now greater scrutiny of the effect of pupil premium funding.
- Structured phonics teaching is well matched to pupils' needs. Consequently, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 1 has been above the national average for the last three years. Pupils use this knowledge effectively when tackling unknown words.
- Leaders and staff have responded suitably to address weaknesses in pupils' outcomes in reading. Staff have received training on the teaching of reading and pupils receive regular reading lessons. The subject leader for English checks that this is having a positive effect. Where this is not clear, then leaders have put in further support. Our visits to lessons, discussions with pupils and review of pupils' work found that pupils' vocabulary and comprehension are generally developing well. However, there remains some variability in the depth of pupils' vocabulary knowledge and the quality of their written responses.
- The profile of reading has increased. The attractive library area, from which pupils can borrow books, and opportunities for Year 6 pupils to take tablet technology home to access online reading materials encourage pupils to read more widely.
- Leaders' and staff's efforts to improve pupils' attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have had a positive effect. This has ensured that the attendance of all groups of pupils is improving and levels of persistent absence are falling. The school's inclusive approaches and behaviour management systems have resulted in no exclusions for a number of years.
- Since September 2018, you have offered provision for two-year-olds. Currently, this is provided within the main school building as an interim arrangement. During my visit to this provision, along with your deputy headteacher, I found this provision to be appropriately staffed and resourced. Staff had planned learning activities which were well matched to children's needs. Consequently,

children were fully engaged with learning and were well behaved. Staff set clear expectations for routines, such as 'tidy up' time, which children listen to and respond to well. Currently, a purpose-built building for your nursery and two-year-old children is underdevelopment. The leader for early years, well supported by the deputy headteacher, has a clear vision for what this provision will deliver once the building work is complete.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the revised curriculum is successfully rolled out from September 2019 and that leaders carefully check its implementation and impact
- the increased challenge by governors in their areas of responsibility, as identified in the scheme of delegation, is embedded to ensure that school leaders are held to account, including for the effect of additional funding
- approaches to the teaching of reading and staff expectations continue to develop so that pupils' reading outcomes improve further, including the quality of their written responses in reading lessons
- leaders' plans for nursery and two-year-old provision are delivered successfully following the completion of the building.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hartlepool Borough. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Reeves  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this one-day inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you, the deputy headteacher, the subject leaders for English and mathematics and the early years leader. I held a meeting with your inclusion team. My two meetings with members of the local governing body, and with the trust's CEO and the chair of the trustees, provided me with additional information. I observed and spoke with pupils during playtime and at other times during the day.

I considered school documentation, policies and information posted on the school website. I considered the 14 parents' responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I reviewed the 41 responses to the staff survey. With you, I visited lessons to

observe the teaching of phonics and reading. I listened to some pupils read within lessons and individually. We also looked at a sample of pupils' reading exercise books. I visited the provision for two-year-olds with your deputy headteacher. I considered information relating to safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, exclusions and bullying.