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Mrs Samantha Bullen
Headteacher
Wansbeck Primary School
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Dear Mrs Bullen

Short inspection of Wansbeck Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 June 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 July 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

Wansbeck Primary School is a happy, well-organised school that is at the heart of the local community. You and your leadership team are committed to helping pupils to succeed. You are passionate about the community you serve and are determined to help pupils to be the best they can be. Central to your work is the development of pupils' social skills and the support of their well-being. Staff and governors maintain an acute focus on these areas and establish excellent relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils are well cared for and make good progress in their learning.

You have accurately identified what the school needs to do to make further improvements. Your plans in this respect are detailed and set out clear steps for you to work towards. You receive good support from the Hull Collaborative Academy Trust, and trust leaders also provide you with effective challenge. This has enabled you to continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning in school. You have good systems in place to develop the leadership skills of staff. You have created a strong leadership team by making good use of opportunities you have to collaborate with other trust schools.

During your previous inspection, inspectors recommended that teachers made sure that pupils do not repeatedly make the same spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes. Teachers take care to correct pupils' mistakes in lessons. Spelling errors

are also routinely identified in pupils' written work across a range of subjects. This helps pupils to avoid future repetitions. Grammatical errors are discussed with pupils, and this helps them to improve their writing. This improvement is underlined by published data showing that pupils' spelling and grammar scores are now above the national average at the end of key stage 2. The quality of pupils' handwriting has also improved, particularly in key stage 2. You have introduced a new handwriting policy and this is starting to help pupils form and join letters more accurately. However, pupils do not maintain the high standards of handwriting evident in their writing books, in other subjects. This shows that teachers' expectations are somewhat inconsistent across the curriculum.

Following the last inspection, inspectors recommended that the activities that teachers plan for children to work independently in the early years should be more sharply focused on their needs. The deputy headteacher has worked closely with the early years team to this end. Teachers make regular checks on the progress that pupils make and use this information to adjust the activities that they plan. Care is taken to ensure that the topics that are chosen attract the interests of the children. Activities are now more purposeful and are matched more closely to children's needs. As a result, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has increased and is now just below the national average.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils' safety and well-being are central to your work. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding requirements are fit for purpose. You have rigorous procedures in place to ensure that all appropriate checks are made when recruiting new staff. The designated safeguarding leader is tenacious in her approach and leaves no stone unturned in order to ensure that pupils receive the best possible support. You provide staff with regular updates throughout the year. You pay particular attention to safeguarding issues that affect your local community and prepare staff well to support pupils. As a result, staff are confident when discussing what to do should they have any concerns about pupils' well-being.

You are working hard to try to improve pupils' attendance. This has been below the national average for some years. Although the rate of persistent absence remains above the national average, the steps you have taken have ensured that this has decreased significantly this year. You have good systems to identify which pupils need to improve their attendance and you carry out frequent checks to measure the success of your actions. Staff work closely with families to provide them with support. The inclusion manager and designated safeguarding leader work with outside agencies to promote the benefits of attending school and to provide additional support for those pupils who miss school too often. However, despite your efforts, the attendance rate sits below the national average and remains an area to improve.

Inspection findings

- In 2018, the proportion of children reaching the early learning goal for reading in the early years was below the national average. Similarly, not enough pupils

reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. Pupils have made average progress across their time in key stage 2 over the past few years. I wanted to find out what you have done to improve pupils' achievement in reading.

- The subject leaders for English have good subject knowledge and use assessment information to identify any reasons for underperformance. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Regular checks help teachers to group pupils effectively so that activities are well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers accurately demonstrate to pupils the sounds that letters make. This helps pupils to repeat the sounds they are learning. Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils, prompting them to explain their answers and providing them with the confidence to 'have a go'. There are good opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge of sounds as they practise their writing skills. As a result, pupils are making good progress in phonics.
- You have identified that pupils need to develop their understanding of vocabulary so that they have a greater understanding of the texts they read. When we visited lessons, we found that pupils are now encouraged to spend time discussing and then using more demanding words in their writing. For example, pupils in Year 3 experimented with different ways to use the words 'catastrophic' and 'disastrous' in their work. Teachers plan reading activities that encourage pupils to think carefully about why authors choose particular words to influence the reader. In key stage 2, pupils are encouraged to use evidence from texts when justifying their answers. When we looked at books, we found that pupils use a wide range of reading skills. Most pupils are now making good progress. However, we found that sometimes the most able pupils in key stage 1 were not sufficiently challenged and could make even better progress.
- In 2018, published information showed that boys' performance in reading, writing and mathematics was below that of girls in school and below boys nationally. School information shows that this was not the case for all year groups. This year, there is no clear difference between the performance of boys and girls. You have encouraged teachers to think carefully about the topics they plan so that all pupils are enthused by their work. Effective social and emotional support provided by the pastoral team ensures that pupils are ready to learn. When we visited lessons, we found that pupils, particularly in key stage 2, were focused on their work and keen to join in class discussions. When we looked at books, the quality of boys' work matched that of girls, and similar progress was being made.
- Pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. You have a clear vision for what you want pupils to achieve; developing pupils socially, emotionally and academically is at the centre of the curriculum you provide. Pupils often have opportunities to visit places of interest, such as the residential visit to Whitby that is linked to a class topic. You use the national curriculum well as a basis for interesting topic work, and subject leaders have begun to review the planning of different subject areas. This is better developed in some curriculum areas, such as science. The science leader has worked alongside other subject leaders in the trust to carefully sequence the science curriculum and determine the most important knowledge and skills that your pupils will need. Plans are in place to provide similar opportunities for other subject leaders.

- Although subject leaders make frequent checks on the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects, pupils do not always have the opportunity to build upon their learning year-on-year. For example, when we looked at books, we found that the work pupils are asked to do in Year 4 is too similar to the work pupils do in Year 3. This means that progress slows. You are currently reviewing your curriculum planning and have identified that this is an important area to address. Leaders use a simple but effective system to check how well pupils achieve. They gather information about the attainment and progress of pupils in all subject areas. This is used to help them identify any improvements that need to be made.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- handwriting and presentation in pupils' reading journals and topic books match the high standards they demonstrate in their writing books
- there is an increased focus on improving attendance and reducing persistent absenteeism
- in reading, teachers plan work that is sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils in key stage 1
- curriculum planning allows pupils to build upon learning each year in subjects other than English and mathematics.

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 Kingston Upon Hull City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jaimie Holbrook
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders. I also met with members of the governing body, representatives from the multi-academy trust, the subject leaders for English, geography, science and religious education, and the designated safeguarding leader. There were eight responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and seven free-text comments. We visited classes together in key stage 1 and key stage 2. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and plans for further improvement. I considered a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding.