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Mrs Diane Parker
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Dear Mrs Parker

Short inspection of Kellington Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 2018, 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 November 2013.

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 September 2015, you have worked with determination to address areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection and tackle the temporary dip in pupils' performance. You managed a significant period of instability in staffing resolutely and have now successfully established effective leadership and teaching teams. Together with your teams and the school's governors, you set about improving teaching, learning and assessment rapidly. As a result, pupils' progress has improved markedly.

You have established a clear vision and ambition for the school. Your focus is unwaveringly on ensuring that pupils achieve highly and develop their personal skills in a safe environment. Staff share your vision and work hard to bring it to life. As a consequence, pupils are happy, enjoy their learning and feel well cared for by the school's staff. Parents, with whom I spoke informally, are without exception extremely positive about the work of the school in caring for their children and helping them learn well. The school's own survey of parents' views fully reflects the positive comments made directly to the inspector. Among the free-text comments to Ofsted's online questionnaires, a small number of parents are not as positive about how well pupils learn.

As the staff cohort has become more stable, particularly in recent months, the high expectations you have modelled have led to rapid improvement. This is leading to much higher proportions of current pupils working at standards expected for their

age. Nevertheless, a small number of pupils with low prior attainment are not yet making rapid enough progress in reading to close the gap fully to expected standards for their age. The work done to accelerate the most able pupils' learning, for example in writing and higher-order mathematical skills, is accelerating progress steadily, but is not yet fully developed. However, as a result of stronger teaching and assessment, pupils learn much better than in recent years and are making very much stronger progress from their various starting points than was the case previously.

At the last inspection, your predecessor was asked to raise the quality of teaching to improve pupils' progress and provide opportunities for pupils to engage with young people from cultures different to their own. On taking up post, you urgently introduced systems to track and check on pupils' progress, to make sure that staff and governors developed a realistic picture of how well pupils were learning. This has enabled staff to plan learning more precisely and match it to what pupils can do and need to do next to sustain good progress. Well-chosen teaching materials and learning schemes for English, mathematics and phonics now support staff effectively in planning for rapid progress and checking it frequently.

Middle leaders for English and mathematics contribute to the school's monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment effectively. They focus hard on developing and sharing effective teaching and learning strategies that make a difference to pupils' learning. The sharper monitoring and analysis of how well pupils learn and make progress has enabled governors to challenge you and other leaders much more rigorously. Their challenge forms an important part of the successful whole school's drive for improvement.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn across a broad range learning activities. The broad and balanced curriculum is extended well and enlivened further through a variety of visits and trips out of school, and a wide range of after-school clubs, such as the crafts and science clubs. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well planned across the curriculum, and this includes learning about other cultures and religions in school. They thoroughly enjoyed learning about Islam from a local imam, which provoked discussions and personal reflection among your pupils. Pupils develop their social skills successfully and benefit from meeting a wide range of young people from other backgrounds during a range of visits and trips. For example, pupils worked successfully with other schools from a contrasting suburban area in West Yorkshire to achieve the 'Eco-Schools' award.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team, with governors, ensures that all the arrangements to safeguard pupils and keep them safe are effective and fit for purpose. The importance that you and governors give to keeping every pupil safe generates a culture of safeguarding, seen in the vigilance and actions of your staff.

Safeguarding checks are carried out and recorded carefully on all adults working with pupils in the school. You make sure that staff are trained well, know how to recognise the different signs of abuse, including neglect, and know what they must

do if they have a concern about a pupil. Careful recording of concerns means that you are able to get suitable help for pupils and their families at an early stage. You support them through effective work with other teams and agencies. You also work with families and teams to improve attendance so that pupils can benefit from the full range of learning and personal development opportunities that the school provides. However, despite your best endeavours, a small number of pupils still do not attend school regularly enough.

You ensure that through the curriculum pupils learn about their safety and risks to their well-being. You give particular importance to pupils' learning about how to keep themselves safe when they use the internet. Pupils know how important it is to keep personal details safe.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I wanted to find out how effectively you have supported and challenged staff to address the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. In particular, I wanted to find out how well phonics is taught and if the school's work to improve progress in reading, writing and mathematics is leading to better rates of progress for all pupils.
- You and your governors have now established a stable staffing structure that enables you and other leaders to focus intensely on the quality of teaching and learning. This has addressed the unevenness in quality of teaching that existed briefly in the past and sets a clear course for further improvement.
- You use the information from your checks on pupils' progress and your monitoring of the quality of teaching to improve pupils' outcomes. You do this by providing additional support for pupils to ensure that they can catch up if they are falling behind. You work with staff to develop their skills to support them further in sustaining strong progress for pupils from their various starting points.
- You have addressed directly the weaker areas of learning you identified through close analysis of the school's progress data. Working with your staff and governors, you have taken a focused approach to bring about rapid improvement in pupils' rates of progress. Actions focus on raising teachers' expectations by sharing best practice and making sharp use of progress information to plan challenging and engaging lessons.
- Through the sharper monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment you have injected energy and dynamism into the day-to-day work of staff and pupils' learning experiences, to good effect. For example, the proportion of pupils on track to reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has improved very rapidly and is currently in line with the national average and improving further. Pupils in both the early years and older classes use their phonics skills well to help them sound out and make sense of unfamiliar words. They use their phonics knowledge effectively to help them read more fluently and develop their accuracy skills in writing. This supports their strong progress in English and across the range of subjects.

- A whole-school approach to improving reading, using a common scheme, has brought about swift improvement in pupils' reading skills that builds on the improvements in teaching and learning of phonics. As a result, the proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, on track to meet and exceed age-related expectations in reading is similar to national figures.
- The approaches to early reading and writing in the early years unit have also been sharpened. Consequently, children now make strong progress in developing their language and communication skills, often from starting points below those typically found for children of their age.
- Your sharper focus on the high-quality teaching of writing, paying particular attention to the accuracy of spelling, grammar and punctuation, is paying dividends. Across both key stages 1 and 2, significantly higher proportions of pupils than in recent years are on track to meet and exceed age-related standards in writing. Similarly, progress is comparable to national averages.
- Pupils' work shows rapid improvement from their starting points, especially over recent months. Pupils write with increasing fluency, accuracy and quality across a range of genres. Occasionally, opportunities to write at length in a wider range of subjects are missed. As a result, pupils, especially the most-able, do not have all the opportunities possible to re-apply their knowledge and consolidate their skills in new contexts. You recognise that a small number of pupils in low-prior-attaining groups need to accelerate their progress further and have put in place further steps to embed and refine effective practice.
- With your leader for mathematics, you have reshaped the curriculum so that there is a greater focus on applying mathematical skills and understanding to solve problems. Teachers plan lessons involving the use of practical equipment. As a result, pupils can make physical models of their work to help them solve problems. This approach contributes effectively to the strong improvement in pupils' progress across the school, and brings additional challenge to the most able pupils.
- You and your governors have worked hard with families and a range of teams to secure better rates of attendance. However, despite your best endeavours, too many pupils do not attend regularly enough. Holidays taken during term time have had a significant impact on the school's attendance figures this year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers embed current effective strategies further, by providing more opportunities for pupils, especially the most-able, to write at length, and by further supporting lower-prior-attaining pupils to accelerate their progress
- continued work with families and a range of teams and agencies reduces persistent absence and improves overall attendance.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Campbell
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and other leaders as well as members of your governing body. I also met with a number of parents and representatives of the local authority. I talked with pupils, both during visits to lessons with you and during break and lunchtime. I evaluated a sample of pupils' books from across the curriculum. I scrutinised records of pupils' progress and attendance and their achievement, and evaluated the school's safeguarding documentation. I took into account the views of parents, pupils and staff, expressed in Ofsted's online questionnaires and the school's own survey or parents. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation documentation and its plans to sustain and improve the school further.