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20 December 2016

Mrs Amy Young
Headteacher
Captain Cook Primary School
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Dear Mrs Young

Short inspection of Captain Cook Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 November 2016, 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 2011.

This school continues to be good.

Since your appointment as headteacher in September 2013, you have provided insightful leadership which has brought about noteworthy improvement to the school. Along with the deputy headteacher and other school leaders, you have identified the school's strengths and priorities for improvement accurately. These are clearly outlined in the school's detailed self-evaluation and development plan. The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You, your staff and governors set high expectations and aspire to help all pupils achieve the very best outcomes. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment continues to improve, following developments which are based upon research and reflective practice. For example, your leaders have investigated effective practice to develop pupils' writing and used their findings to take actions tailored to the needs of your pupils. Similarly, the school's recently created assessment systems have evolved through thoughtful development and refinement.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of your inclusive, harmonious and friendly school. Pupils are proud to attend. They develop good citizenship skills through your curriculum and the opportunities provided to take responsible roles from an early age. Pupils feel safe, grow in confidence and develop good learning behaviours. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the efforts that you and your staff take to develop their children, both socially and academically. The school has largely tackled the area identified for improvement at the previous

inspection. You and your staff have worked hard to ensure that pupils make consistently good or better progress in English. Pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills across the school. From the very start, they develop good phonics skills in the early years and throughout key stage 1. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above the national average for the last three years. By the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils working at the expected level in reading is above that found nationally. In key stage 2, pupils make significantly better progress in reading than is found nationally. As a result, a greater proportion of pupils are working at the expected level and the proportion working at a high standard matches that found nationally.

Your work to improve pupils' writing skills is paying dividends. By the end of Year 6, a higher proportion of pupils are working at or above the expected level in grammar, punctuation and spelling compared to the proportions found nationally. While pupils' progress in writing is broadly in line with that found nationally, there is further work to be done to improve the number of pupils working at the expected standard and particularly at a greater depth. Your detailed plans are well devised to bring about the required improvement and there is early evidence that they are beginning to have a positive impact.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your staff and governors give the highest priority to keeping pupils safe. Leaders and governors have ensured that current safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are of a high quality. Careful safeguarding checks are carried out for all staff, governors and volunteers. Leaders regularly update the safeguarding and child protection policies to ensure that current requirements are met and all staff understand the procedures and their own responsibilities. Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training so they know how to keep pupils safe, including recent training about how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism.

Pupils are well taught about how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take and know that staff will help them if they ever have concerns. Pupils say incidents of bullying are rare in their school. The school's records show that incidents of misbehaviour and bullying are infrequent and that these are quickly addressed by the staff. Pupils, parents and staff agree that the school is a safe place to be.

Inspection findings

- Since your appointment, you have successfully identified the key priorities to address and have taken decisive action to drive forward improvement. You provide comprehensive guidance to staff about what the school's priorities are and why they are important. Consequently, staff have a clear understanding of the goals the school aims to achieve.

- You and your leaders have implemented very thorough systems for checking the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Findings from this monitoring are well used to plan training which continuously improves the quality of teaching across the school. Recently, you have increased the involvement of teaching assistants in training events. This is helping them to improve their skills for supporting pupils' learning, both within lessons and for interventions aimed to diminish learning differences. You recognise that there is some more work to be done to enhance further the skills of these staff.
- A well-structured approach to assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress has been established. You now have in place secure starting points for pupils' attainment. This enables leaders and staff to check pupils' progress in the new national curriculum effectively. The connections between assessments, individual pupils' records and whole-class overviews provide a powerful tool for teachers. This ensures that their planning is well matched to pupils' needs. Prompt identification of any slippage in pupils' progress and appropriate intervention are helping pupils make good progress and to 'catch up' where necessary. There is still further work to be done to fully embed this recently developed approach.
- The English subject leader's team has a good understanding of the priorities for improving pupils' outcomes in writing and reading. Your leaders rightly identify improving the proportion of pupils working at the greater depth as a key focus. Detailed plans are in place which take account of effective practice found beyond your school. These plans are well tailored to your school, due to leaders' careful analysis of current pupils' progress information and consideration of your pupils' views of the teaching of writing.
- Reading is taught in a well-structured way which is thoughtfully matched to pupils' needs. Your teachers maintain detailed records of pupils' progress in group reading sessions and assess regularly to ensure that pupils are reading books at an appropriate level. During the inspection, younger pupils demonstrated effective use of phonics skills and the most able pupils read with fluency and good comprehension.
- Governors are ambitious to achieve the best academic outcomes and personal development for pupils. They have a good understanding of the school's priorities and the impact of actions aimed to bring about improvements. This is because they work well with school leaders and staff to check strategically that actions are improving pupils' outcomes.
- Overall, your school attendance levels are higher than those found nationally. This is because good attendance has a high profile around the school. Pupils understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Wherever pupils' absence levels are a concern, you take decisive action to provide guidance and support for pupils and their families. This has a positive impact upon improving attendance levels in the vast majority of instances.
- In early years, children's outcomes have improved over the last three years and the proportion achieving a good level of development is above the national average. Generally, children are making at least good progress from their starting points and are well prepared to start Year 1. The proportion of children entitled to pupil premium funding varies greatly from year to year. You check the progress of these children carefully and they make good progress. The

differences in outcomes achieved by these children is diminishing when compared to others nationally.

- High staff expectations, a caring atmosphere and opportunities for individual and group responsibility develop pupils' personal and social skills effectively. As a result, pupils' behaviour in lessons and at playtimes is exemplary. They work hard, are kind and supportive to their peers and display very good manners.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's plan to improve writing is implemented and, as a result, pupils' progress improves and the proportion of pupils working at greater depth increases
- the school's assessment and systems for recording pupil progress information are embedded, to enable leaders and teachers to accelerate further pupils' learning.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Middlesbrough. 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 and the key stage 1 phase leader. I talked with pupils about what it feels like to be a member of the school community. I observed and spoke with pupils during playtime and at other times during the day. I held discussions with your local authority adviser and with five governors who were able to provide me with additional information. I also took into account school documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website. I considered the 86 responses to the parent questionnaire, Parent View. I also reviewed the nine responses to the staff questionnaire. Alongside you, I visited four classes to observe teaching and learning. I listened to pupils from a range of abilities read and observed an intervention group. We looked at pupils' English work to help us evaluate the quality of teaching and learning over time. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also considered.

This inspection particularly focused upon the following aspects of the school's work:

- leaders' and governors' impact on addressing the area for improvement in the previous inspection report
- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in reading and writing, and current pupils' progress in these subjects
- the impact of leaders' and staff actions to improve pupils' attendance levels, particularly for pupils with high levels of absence
- children's progress in early years, including the progress of children entitled to pupil premium funding.