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Mr Stuart Reader
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Reader

Short inspection of Dunn Street Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 January 2017, 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 October 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, staff and governors have sustained that passion you have to give pupils the best start in life. The recent school motto, 'Good is not good enough', is embraced by staff and pupils alike. This has ensured higher expectations from everyone. Work to promote pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development remains a strength in the school. You provide a rich and varied curriculum and surround pupils with care and support. This builds pupils' confidence and self-esteem. As a result of you and your team's endeavours, pupils enjoy school, have positive attitudes to learning and behave and achieve well. They are prepared successfully for the next steps in their education and for their future lives as citizens in multicultural modern Britain.

Following some turbulence in staffing after the last inspection, you have now a settled and ambitious, receptive team who are working with you to continue to drive the school forward. Areas that were in need of improvement at the time of the last inspection have been tackled effectively. Robust action has been taken to ensure that teaching is consistently good. Leaders have undertaken significant work to develop assessment systems. This means that teachers are now able to use information about pupils' current achievements to plan learning that meets the needs of most pupils and helps them to achieve well. You are continuing to refine these systems to make sure that teaching stretches the most able pupils consistently. You are also adapting systems so that governors can keep a closer eye on the progress of different groups of pupils in the school. Following disappointment

in last year's outcomes in Year 6 pupils' spelling and grammar tests, you continue to work with staff to improve pupils' skills in these aspects of the curriculum. Recent strident actions and increased partnership working with parents and carers has helped to improve attendance rates to average and reduce the previously high rates of persistent absence significantly.

Governors are fully involved in the life of the school and readily provide challenge and support to you and other leaders to make sure the school improves. A wide range of information is provided to them at governing body meetings. This helps them to check how well the school is doing. However, governors do not at times have the full range of information they need to hold you and your team fully to account. For example, reports on different groups of pupils' learning and progress are currently limited to the Reception, Year 2 and Year 6 classes. While you are vigilant in recording and checking any rare incident of untoward behaviour, the way that you gather that information makes it difficult for governors to check the impact of your behaviour policy over time.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a suitable quality. You and your staff know each pupil and their family well. Parents speak highly of the school and the welcoming 'family atmosphere'. They report that their children are safe and well cared for. They also report that you and staff are approachable and always ready to listen and support in times of need. Strong partnerships with children's social care, other local authority professionals and the local police force mean that referrals to the right agencies are made promptly when concerns are identified. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are safe in school. They are trained well in how to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns. This includes risks from potential radical or extremist views and from social media, and the impact of risks in the community such as domestic violence. Your child protection policy has been updated to make sure your procedures are clear to staff, parents and prospective parents who may read your website.

Inspection findings

- Improvements in the early years have ensured that children get off to a flying start. The leader has transformed the quality of teaching and the learning environment. Children settle in well and are enthusiastic participants in the rich array of activities on offer. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has improved year on year and is now close to that found nationally. This represents good progress from children's typically low skills and abilities on entry. Vibrant displays on the walls showcase the varied curriculum on offer. Together with children's workbooks and learning journals, they celebrate children's good achievements successfully. Partnership with parents is strong and this ensures smooth transitions into the Nursery Year. Parents are welcomed into classes and encouraged to be involved in their children's learning successfully. Children develop the good learning habits, good behaviour and positive attitudes

that stand them in good stead as they move through the school. They are now well prepared for the rigours of key stage 1.

- The quality of teaching is good, and as a result pupils generally make good progress in their learning. In lessons, pupils are responsive, diligent and keen to learn. There is very little difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils, boys, girls, and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because of the way that pupils' differing needs and prior skills are identified by teachers, and the way that teachers usually use this information to plan activities to help pupils move on successfully in their learning. Timely actions are taken to ensure that pupils who are at risk of falling behind are supported to catch up to where they should be. Carefully planned small-group activities take place each day for pupils who need extra help. You are aware, through regular monitoring of learning and reviews of pupils' books, that occasionally tasks do not stretch the most able pupils sufficiently. You are working with staff to tackle this.
- Improvements to the way that reading and phonics is being taught are paying dividends. There has been good improvement in the proportion of pupils meeting expectations in the Year 1 national phonics screening check. The proportion in 2016 was similar to that found nationally. Disadvantaged pupils' achievements were above average. Older pupils, including the most able, were seen to read fluently and with expression. They relish the wider range of books and more challenging texts they now read. They were thoroughly engrossed in discussing the literary qualities and moral issues arising from their study of 'Macbeth'. The least able pupils utilise their phonic skills well to build unfamiliar words in their reading books. Those who read to the inspector were keen to show their skills and the enthusiasm they have for reading. You have identified that writing is not as strong, and particularly pupils' grammar and spelling. Work is ongoing to tackle this relative weakness. Staff are developing their skills in teaching mathematics in line with the requirements of the national curriculum; this is ensuring that pupils are given more opportunities to develop their mathematical understanding, reasoning and problem-solving skills at greater depth.
- The rich and varied curriculum is enhanced by many visits, visitors, sporting, musical and creative activities, in school and out. This helps to raise pupils' aspirations and their enjoyment of school, and to develop any hidden talents they may have. There is something on offer for everyone. The curriculum is also carefully planned to ensure that pupils gain a good understanding of cultures and faiths other than their own. This is because pupils' personal, social, moral, cultural and emotional development and well-being is a priority and remains a strength. The curriculum, assemblies and individual support for pupils ensure that they are also well informed about how to be safe and keep safe. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying. They report that any cases are very rare and tackled swiftly by staff. An additional safeguarding programme supplements the strong work undertaken to build pupils' resilience and confidence, and to help pupils understand risky situations and how to respond to them.
- Pupils behave well; they are polite, friendly and are keen to tell visitors how much they like school, how they are safe and well cared for. High-quality relationships between adults and pupils are evident from the early years

onwards. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare and no pupil has been excluded, either temporarily or permanently, since the last inspection. You make sure any incidents of misbehaviour are recorded, including those that take place at break or lunchtimes, and check them carefully. You know that record-keeping does not enable governors to see clearly the impact of your positive approach to managing behaviour in a simple or clear format.

- You, other leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas that require improvement. Action plans link closely to the areas you have identified that need more work, and these are checked regularly for impact by you and by governors. Governors know the school well because they visit the school regularly and all are linked to subject areas that they check carefully. They receive regular reports on the progress that pupils are making across the school towards their end of year targets. But as yet they do not receive information on the progress of different groups of pupils in year groups other than at the end of the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2. You are taking action to tackle this by amending your assessment systems further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvements being made to the way behaviour incidents are recorded enable governors to check the number and type of incidents over time more easily
- all pupils are sufficiently challenged in lessons, particularly the most able pupils
- improvements being made to the system to assess pupils' progress in lessons enable governors to identify more clearly the progress of different groups in year groups other than at the end of the early years, Year 2 and Year 6.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for South Tyneside. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection my areas of focus included:

- the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress in lessons
- the effectiveness of the early years (Nursery and Reception)
- the impact of leaders' and governors' work in tackling the areas requiring improvement at the last inspection and in driving improvements since then
- the effectiveness of work to improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absence rates.

I held meetings with you, senior and middle leaders. I also met with the leader of the early years and attendance leader, the local authority's school improvement partner and eight representatives from the governing body. I spoke to pupils in lessons and on the yard to check their views of the school, and took the views of six pupils who responded to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire into account. The views of nine parents I met on the yard were considered, along with the written comments made by five parents who completed the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View.

I observed learning in three lessons, two of which we observed together. In lessons we looked at a number of pupils' workbooks and you also provided a range of books for me to review out of the classroom. Three pupils were heard to read their current reading books and I listened to a number of pupils reading out loud in class. I reviewed a range of documentation including documents of a safeguarding nature, pupils' progress information, the written evaluation of the school's work and your current school improvement plan.