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21 June 2018

Mrs Gill Hardacre
Interim Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hardacre

Short inspection of Sinnington Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 June 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 February 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since taking the role of interim headteacher in January 2018, along with the Ryedale Federation executive headteacher, you have promptly identified the areas of the school that need to improve. You have successfully drawn on your expertise as the Ryedale Federation primary director to drive improvement effectively. You have rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching and put in place relevant performance management approaches and staff training to further develop their skills. You are making effective use of staff expertise across the federation, which is raising expectations for pupils' outcomes. There are clear plans in place to build on this work, including improving middle leadership capacity, through federation-wide initiatives. While these initiatives are moving the school in the right direction, many are very new and it is not possible to determine their effect on pupils' outcomes across all year groups.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, identified as a strength at the previous inspection, has been maintained. Leaders and staff have created a caring, friendly and nurturing environment. Important roles for pupils in school, such as being a member of the school council, help to develop pupils into responsible citizens. During the inspection, relationships between pupils and staff were very positive throughout. Pupils understand, and adhere to, the

school's behaviour management approaches. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and other times throughout the day was very good. Parents' responses to the Ofsted survey, Parent View, were overwhelmingly positive about your school. Many highlighted the caring environment and staff who take the time to know and help their children. Similarly, pupils told me that some of the best things about your school are that everyone is friendly and kind and teachers know them really well.

The areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have only been partially addressed. The first area for improvement, to improve teaching from good to outstanding in order to raise achievement further in reading, writing and mathematics, needs further work. As a result, by the end of Year 6 pupils' progress in mathematics has been significantly below the national average for the two years prior to you taking up post. By the end of Year 2, not enough pupils have been achieving greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. Our review of school pupil progress information showed that while some year groups are now making good progress across a range of subjects, this is not consistently the case across the school. We agreed that there is further work to do to improve pupils' progress particularly in mathematics and reading and to ensure that more pupils achieve the higher standards in these subjects.

At the previous inspection, it was identified that the responsibilities of middle leaders needed to be extended to enable them to lead their subjects across all years in the school. Since taking up post, you have reviewed the effectiveness of middle leadership and are taking appropriate action to restructure these roles. This work links well to recent developments to build middle leadership capacity across the federation. However, currently along with your other roles, you are also providing leadership for early years and mathematics. By September 2018, the recently appointed head of school will be in post and it is intended that he will take responsibility for leading mathematics. Furthermore, the newly established federation-wide middle leaders will be in place. This increased leadership capacity will place the school on a stronger platform to drive improvements in early years, reading and mathematics.

A final area to strengthen at the previous inspection was to improve teaching and children's progress in early years. There have been some recent improvements to the organisation of the early years learning environment and staff have recently introduced improvements to approaches to recording observational assessments. However, you agree that there is more to be done to improve children's progress across the Reception Year. Plans are in place for your pre-school provider to join the federation in September 2018. You are already considering the opportunities to develop further children's transition from pre-school into Reception and to ensure that they make at least good progress from their starting points.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture at your school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. They carry out relevant checks for all staff, governors and volunteers. Staff and governors receive

regular and appropriate training, so they know how to keep pupils safe, including training about how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Consequently, staff and governors understand the safeguarding procedures and their own responsibilities. You and your staff work effectively with parents and other agencies.

Your pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. Pupils know the different forms that bullying can take and know staff will help them if they ever have concerns. Pupils believe that behaviour is very good and that incidents of bullying are rare. Your records confirm this and show that staff follow up the limited number of incidents of poor behaviour promptly. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour was very good in lessons and at other times throughout the school day. Parents agree that their child feels safe at your school and that their children are well looked after.

Inspection findings

- You have accurately identified the need to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Along with support from the federation you have taken prompt action to raise expectations, improve performance management systems and ensure that staff are receiving relevant training. Revised approaches to recording assessments of pupils' progress are showing where support is required to address pupils' underachievement. Relevant support is targeted to help these pupils to 'catch up'. However, your records show that there is still more to be done to improve pupils' progress in reading and mathematics.
- Our consideration of the school self-evaluation and school improvement plans showed that these need review by leaders. Current self-evaluation judgements are overly positive considering what leaders know about pupils' outcomes, including for current pupils. The school improvement plan, while generally targeting relevant priorities, lacks details in timescales, measures for success and the steps leaders will take to check for improvement. You have plans in place to revise these documents alongside the incoming head of school.
- The organisation of governance has been changed since the previous inspection. There is now one governing board across the federation schools. This is helping governors to have a wider view of effective practice and to consider how this can be transferred into individual schools. The link governor role enables governors to know your particular school in depth. However, governors have been too ready in the past to accept information from leaders without giving sufficient challenge. While this is beginning to improve, a sharper focus on pupils' outcomes is required to ensure that leaders are held to account for school improvement priorities.
- Overall, pupils' achievement in the Year 1 phonics screen check has been variable over the last three years. During our visits to classrooms we noted that while staff plan phonics teaching to match pupils' ability, some of the activities observed were not linked effectively to the purpose of the session and sometimes adults' modelling of phonics skills was not strong enough. Expectations for pupils' recording were not high enough and consequently some younger pupils'

presentation and handwriting is poor.

- In 2017, pupils' progress in reading by the end of key stage 2 was below that found nationally. Current pupils' progress in reading across all year groups remains variable. Our review of information about the teaching of reading, including teachers' records, showed an inconsistent approach to the regular teaching of reading and to maintaining records of reading assessments. While there is emerging evidence of improved pupils' progress and attainment for the current Year 6 pupils, you agreed there is more to be done to develop a consistently strong approach to teaching and assessing reading across the school.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 has been significantly below the national average for the last two years. Meetings and training with other federation schools is beginning to develop teachers' skills in mathematics teaching. Our review of books and visits to lessons showed an increased focus on teaching problem solving in mathematics, which was having a positive effect upon pupils' learning. Presentation of work by older pupils was very strong and reflected high expectations for this aspect of their work. However, pupils' books showed that sometimes pupils continue to work through similar number calculations of which they have already demonstrated a secure understanding. Also, instances of developing pupils' mathematical reasoning were limited.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected and higher standards in English grammar punctuation and spelling was below the national average. You have introduced different approaches to strengthen this aspect of teaching, including discrete lessons linked to pupils' writing lessons. School information for current pupils indicates that there are improving pupils' outcomes in English grammar punctuation and spelling by the end of Year 6.
- The numbers of children starting early years is variable over the last three years. Our review of the children's levels of development on entry to your school show this to be generally typical for their age. However, the proportions of children achieving a good level of development has often been below that found nationally. Furthermore, no children are exceeding early learning goals in reading, writing or mathematics. While these children are well integrated in classes with older key stage 1 pupils, they are not making good progress from their starting points.
- Over the last three years, levels of attendance have improved and remained higher than those found nationally. This reflects the importance that staff, parents and pupils place on regular school attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new arrangements for leadership, including the appointment of the head of school from September 2018 and the federation's increased capacity for middle leadership, promptly drive improvements in pupils' progress
- the school self-evaluation is accurate and supported by information about pupils'

outcomes and that the school improvement plans include well targeted actions and clear approaches to measuring success, including the strategic role of governors to hold leaders to account

- the recently introduced approaches to improving mathematics are developed further, so that pupils develop their problem solving and reasoning skills and that pupils' progress and attainment, particularly at the higher standards and greater depth, improves
- the approaches to the teaching of phonics and reading are improved to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment in these subjects
- early years children make good progress from their starting points on entry to Reception.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing board, 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

Michael Reeves
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you and the leader for English. I observed and spoke with pupils during playtime and at other times during the day. I held a meeting with a representative from the local authority. My discussions with the link governor and the Ryedale Federation executive headteacher provided me with additional information. I considered school documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website. I considered the 32 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View and the 13 responses to the pupil survey. Along with you, I visited all classes to observe teaching and learning. I listened to pupils read within lessons. I looked at pupils' phonics and mathematics work to help evaluate the quality of teaching and learning over time. I considered information relating to safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and bullying.