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Mrs Michelle Cunnington  
Headteacher  
North Featherstone Junior and Infant School  
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Dear Mrs Cunnington

### **Short inspection of North Featherstone Junior and Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 26 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 March 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

Since your appointment to the school four years ago, you have built strong capacity among the leadership team to secure rapid improvement in the school's performance. The new governing body constituted in autumn 2016 and the astute recruitment of teaching staff over the last two or three years have enabled you to effect changes that benefit pupils' personal and academic development throughout the school. Teaching is now consistently good, with examples of outstanding practice emerging in many aspects of the school's work. For example, pupils enjoy a richly engaging curriculum that makes learning relevant, interesting and fun. As a consequence, pupils of all abilities ages and backgrounds make good progress. An increasing number are attaining at greater depth in all classes and subjects. Pupils, at the end of Year 6, are prepared well for secondary school.

Your improvement plans are clear, precise and well measured. Outcomes for pupils have improved year on year, since 2015. Current school data indicates that this improving trend has been sustained this year, with all pupils making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. You have successfully addressed many of the inconsistencies in the school's performance in the national tests and assessments in 2017, particularly pupils' lower-than-expected progress in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 6. You and your leaders know the school well, identify weaknesses quickly and take prompt action to secure best practice. Your aspirations for the school are high and you and your leadership team, including governors, have the skills and expertise to improve the school further.

You have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Following the findings in the last inspection, teaching, including in Years 3 and 4, is now much stronger. Your expectations of teachers and pupils are high and you provide effective support to ensure that everyone achieves the targets you set for them.

Pupils understand what they need to do to achieve well and you check closely that they make the progress they should. Leaders understand their roles and responsibilities fully and undertake their duties diligently. Where they need support, you provide the training and guidance they need to secure improvement. The high quality of education encourages pupils to work hard and inspires in them a love of learning. For example, they talk with awe about how Stone Age man did not read or write but left cave paintings to depict their culture and lifestyle. They also explained that, 'Egyptians did write but it was not like our writing, it was more like writing in pictures'. Pupils undertake projects at home, for example to build models to depict what they see as 'typical British' icons. They participate eagerly in sport to enhance their physical fitness and musical events to broaden their cultural awareness. Pupils particularly love the 'science days' and 'maths challenges' that teachers plan to deepen pupils' investigative skills and their understanding of the world. Pupils cooperate well with others and also take responsibility for their learning by busying themselves when teachers are supporting others. As a consequence, they learn to become confident, independent learners. Staff know their pupils well and provide effective support to meet individual needs. Occasionally, the level of challenge is not high, particularly for the most able children in the early years, who are capable of achieving more.

Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for at school. Parents affirm that this is true. The school is a happy, welcoming environment where pupils feel valued. Imaginative, colourful displays celebrate pupils' achievements and inspire others to aim high. Pupils understand the high expectations placed on them to behave well and work hard. Parents speak very highly of how staff support children and their families, particularly when difficulties arise at home or school. Pupils explain that they enjoy learning because teachers plan interesting activities to challenge them. They know that attending regularly is crucial if they are to achieve well and most do. As some parents reiterated, 'We can't keep our children off school even when they are really poorly, because they don't want to miss anything!' Parents say their children make good progress and that teachers work hard, particularly praising the provision for pupils who have special educational and emotional needs. Most comments received through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View free-text service and direct conversations with parents were positive. Parents' comments included: 'An excellent school – my children are very happy here' and 'I wish I had enjoyed school as much as my child does! It is such a happy place! I couldn't ask for more.'

Teachers and support staff are very effective practitioners. They know what constitutes good learning and devise activities accordingly, using the accurate and reliable assessment information to inform their planning. Leaders check that planning builds on pupils' previous learning so that pupils develop their knowledge and skills step by step. Pupils' personal development, including their behaviour for learning, is strong because pupils know that their education is important. Occasional lapses in the quality of pupils' written work do occur, for example in pupils' spelling, punctuation, grammar and general presentation, particularly in subjects other than literacy and numeracy. This was an improvement priority in the last inspection and needs further attention. You encourage parents to support their children's learning at home and plan events for parents to seek further guidance, for example with reading, mathematics, science and e-safety.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and the governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that all staff and governors understand their duty of care responsibilities. Taking care of children is high priority in the school. Governors check that safeguarding procedures are reviewed and revised regularly. Pre-employment vetting is robust to ensure that all staff are checked and cleared to work with pupils. Everyone has up-to-date training to keep children safe at school and all staff understand the procedures for first aid training, risk assessments, site security and supervision of pupils. Staff know to refer any concerns they might have about any child promptly and to follow all agreed procedures diligently. Leaders ensure that pupils know how to stay safe outside school and remind them of dangers posed by, for example, social media sites and about 'stranger danger'. Pupils explain confidently the different risks and hazards that might occur and how to mitigate against these. They know what to do in the event of a fire and to not set fire alarms off without reason, explaining that, 'This would be silly. It would frighten children and waste people's time.'

Pupils say they feel safe at school. They know what constitutes bullying and understand the need to be sensitive towards pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour or emotions. They say that bullying does not really happen at school and that if it did occur, teachers would deal with it straightaway, because, as some explained, 'You should not be unkind to others because you wouldn't like it if it happened to you'. You monitor pupils' behaviour and make referrals to gain emotional and mental support for them as needed.

## **Inspection findings**

- In 2017, pupils' attainment was above average at the end of both key stage 1 and 2. However, in that year pupils at the end of Year 6 did not make the expected progress in reading and mathematics based on their starting points at the end of Year 2. Therefore, in this inspection, I wanted to check if current pupils have made good progress at all key stages and all subjects this year.
- From below typical starting points, children in the early years have made good progress. While in 2017 none exceeded a good level of development, a significant number have this year and so are well prepared for learning in Year 1. This is because leadership of the early years is effective. Teaching has been strengthened. Staff review children's progress closely and modify provision to plan for individual needs effectively. Leaders have identified that some children could be challenged further.
- By the end of Year 2 in 2017, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average and a significant number exceeded the expected standards in these subjects. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils have made good progress this year, including among disadvantaged pupils and those who have special needs and/or disabilities. With an increased proportion working at greater depth, some have made outstanding progress.
- The picture is equally positive at key stage 2 for pupils in all classes. While the proportion working at greater depth has increased this year, there are occasions where pupils, particularly among the middle-attaining pupils, could be challenged further. In addition, a few others, who join the school late in key stage 2 and have gaps in their learning, do not always make better-than-expected progress. Analysis of pupils'

assessments and work in their books confirms that those who are at the school from key stage 1 onwards consistently make good progress. A high number are on target to achieve the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics this year.

- With 2017 performance data suggesting that some pupils in Year 6 did not make the expected progress and with no children exceeding expectation at the end of early years, I checked whether teachers' assessments are accurate and those pupils at risk of falling behind are identified early enough to help them catch up. From examining the school's assessment information and pupils' workbooks and talking with pupils, evidence convincingly shows that procedures to measure pupils' progress are entirely reliable. Teachers use this information effectively to plan learning to meet pupils' needs. As a result, almost all pupils make the progress they should. With a high level of challenge on most occasions, pupils' progress is accelerating rapidly throughout the school. When not reminded sufficiently, a few, among all ability groups, make careless errors in their spelling, grammar, punctuation and presentation, particularly in subjects other than English. This detracts from the overall good quality work they produce.
- I also looked at the actions you and your leaders instigate to ensure consistently good progress among all pupils irrespective of their starting points. You accurately identified inconsistencies in the school's performance in 2017 by probing the results of the tests and assessments in depth. Leaders took decisive action to track pupils' progress this year by checking closely that teaching is always good or better and the work pupils produce is of the level it needs to be to reflect good progress. As a result, teaching is now much stronger and all pupils are making good progress. The few who struggle to close gaps in their learning are generally those who join the school late in key stage 2 and so do not benefit fully from all that the school has to offer.
- With some of the most able pupils not making the progress expected of them in reading and mathematics last year, I looked at the level of challenge teachers plan for them. These pupils are challenged well in most classes and generally teachers' expectations are high. But there is scope to raise targets for some of the most able, particularly in early years and at key stage 2, so that more achieve at greater depth.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- provision for the most able children in the early years and the school generally is consistently challenging to help more achieve at greater depth in all their learning
- pupils take greater pride in their written work and minimise errors, particularly in their spelling, grammar, punctuation and presentation in all subjects
- leaders do all that they can to help pupils who join the school late in key stage 2 make the best progress they can.

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

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and all your staff, the vice chair of the governing body and four other governors. I also spoke with the chair of the governing body on the telephone. I met with your phase leaders and key subject leaders, and other staff with specific responsibilities. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and examined the evidence therein. I reviewed documentation relating to pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan, safeguarding checks and policies and procedures. I observed pupils around the school, including in the playground and the dining hall and in classes. Together with your assistant headteacher, we visited all classes and discussed these observations together. I looked at pupils' books, spoke to pupils about their work and listened to them read. I also met with pupils to get their views of the school. (Pupils did not submit any responses to the online questionnaire from Ofsted.) I spoke with a number of parents at the start of the day to seek their views about the school. I also took into account 47 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the school's own survey of parents' views from last term, and the 45 free-text messages submitted by parents to Ofsted. I also considered the 19 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.