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Mrs Anne Swift
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Swift

Short inspection of Goathland Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 30 November 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 December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. This is a result of the warm, friendly and caring culture that exists at Goathland Primary School. Since, as you put it, 'coming out of retirement to support the school', you have had an immediate impact upon the school's improvement. You are committed to the school's ongoing development. As you said in our meeting, 'I don't see this as a caretaking role, I want to drive progress.' The evidence of your resolve is clear. The positive, friendly and welcoming ethos is clear testament to your efforts to provide a safe, nurturing and engaging space for all.

School leaders, including governors, share a passionate commitment to the success of this very small, family-focused school. Your clarity of vision has galvanised the small staff team and created a tangible sense of purpose. All members of staff, except the cook and the caretaker, are relatively new, but collectively you are already having a positive impact upon the life of the school and the progress of the pupils. Your self-evaluation is accurate, and your development plan is focused upon the key priorities for improvement.

Staff work closely with pupils, parents and volunteers to ensure that the school is at the heart of the village community that it serves. Pupils are known, cared for and valued. They are confident, self-assured and enthusiastic. Parents greatly value Goathland as a unique school with an evident community atmosphere. Those parents spoken to during the inspection and those who responded to Ofsted's online

questionnaire, Parent View, were extremely positive about the school. Comments included, 'Goathland Primary School is at the heart of its community. The school is warm and caring and gives each child the ambition and drive to succeed in everything they do. My children feel safe within the school environment and I too feel secure in the knowledge that they are part of such a fantastic little school.' Another parent wrote, 'My children are very happy at school and making very good progress with an excellent teacher. Having recently been in school to see what the pupils do and try and do the same work, I have realised just how much they learn and how well organised and taught the class is.'

Parents, governors and staff are aware of the recent unsettling time for the school, as governors work to secure its future leadership. Working together with staff and governors, you have ensured that the pupils have not been negatively affected by this. These efforts have been successful. Pupils are happy. They enjoy coming to school. As a result of this, attendance is excellent, and no pupil is persistently absent from school.

Leaders have responded positively to the areas for improvement outlined at the previous inspection. Pupils now know how to be successful in lessons and are able to check on their progress. They are encouraged to do their best and not to give up when they make mistakes. Teachers now routinely make sure that pupils are aware of how to improve their work. They give clear guidance and next steps. However, the level of challenge for the most able pupils remains inconsistent. As a result, these pupils are not always given more complex and demanding tasks, to ensure that they achieve highly.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your staff and governors have an unwavering commitment to ensuring pupils' well-being and safety. Leaders have ensured that safeguarding procedures are organised, thorough and fit for purpose. As designated safeguarding leader you are clear about the expectations and responsibilities of the role. Your new administrator has reviewed and reorganised the school's records. Information is readily available when needed and record-keeping is meticulous. Staff receive updated information and regular training to ensure that they can identify any indicators of potential harm.

Pupils are given a range of opportunities to learn about how to keep themselves safe. They talk positively about how this learning reflects the school's rural setting. Pupils are also well informed about the broader aspects of staying safe including when working online or using social media. Pupils are aware of the work starting next week to improve the security of the school site. They understand why this work is taking place and think that it is a good idea. Pupils say that they feel 'very safe' at school. They affirm that 'there is always someone to talk to if you are sad, worried or upset'.

Pupils have great confidence in the adults in the school. They say that there is very little bullying in school but accept that some children can and do fall out. However, they

are quick to point out that staff always help to 'sort this out'. This view is supported by parents, who report that any issues are dealt with quickly and effectively by staff.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have an ambitious and clear vision of the education they want to provide; an education, which is deeply rooted within their local community and the beautiful setting in which the school is situated. A culture of respect, tolerance and gratitude permeates the school.
- Leaders have arranged the school into two classes: one for Reception, Years 1 and 2 (Base 1); and another for Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 (Base 2).
- In Base 1, children work and play well together. The provision is well equipped and has some good resources. However, you accept that the provision lacks focus and organisation. The outdoor area is not currently used effectively to support basic numeracy and literacy. As a result, the younger children lack purpose in their activities and their concentration is not sustained. At times, they flit between activities and struggle to focus. You recognise that this is an area for improvement and you are already taking action to review this provision and to support the teacher who is new in post.
- There are high-quality, trusting relationships between staff and children. These ensure that children's emotional needs are well met. The children are happy and confident, full of energy and enthusiasm. However, teachers miss opportunities to widen children's vocabulary. For example, when reading 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch', the meaning of the word 'surveyed' was checked, but words and phrases such as 'jubilant', 'scrumptious lunch', and 'sea shanties' were read without clarification. Consequently, the younger children struggled to understand the story.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are able to read with fluency. You have a small number of committed volunteers who visit the school regularly to listen to the pupils read. This commitment is commendable and is of great help to the school. However, you recognise that some struggle with unfamiliar words and that more work is needed to broaden pupils' vocabulary in both reading and writing. For example, in Base 2, when working on homophones, older pupils struggled with words such as 'aisle' and 'isle', 'draft' and 'draught'. You accept that pupils need more opportunities to practise their reading skills, which would help to widen their vocabulary and support them to make more rapid progress in reading.
- Leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) have a detailed understanding of pupils' individual needs. Teachers and the teaching assistant tailor activities that support individual pupils' learning and meet their specific needs. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are making good progress towards their personal targets.
- Mathematics is a particular favourite among the pupils in Base 2. When we visited the class, they were positively engaged in different tasks. The older pupils were enjoying the challenge of calculating the perimeter and area of composite shapes. They were able to explain, in detail, the steps that they had taken to arrive at their answers and were keen to attempt more challenging work.

Meanwhile, Year 4 pupils were demonstrating their ability to reason with the 'convince me' tasks that the teacher had set. Pupils were able to explain, with clarity, how they had arrived at the correct answer. Pupils' books clearly show that they are making good progress in mathematics.

- Following recent training, teachers have introduced new strategies to develop pupils' writing skills. Pupils speak positively about their 'writing stations' and how these activities help them to focus on the different aspects of writing including, composition, spelling and punctuation. However, it is too early to see the impact of these measures. Leaders are aware that teaching does not consistently ensure that activities are sufficiently challenging or that pupils have enough chances to apply their English grammar, punctuation and spelling skills, in a variety of forms and across a range of subjects.
- Governors know the school very well. They visit the school regularly and use the information that they are given to offer appropriate support and challenge. Governors are highly committed to the future success of the school. They are resolute in their desire to ensure that the school goes from strength to strength. Their passionate commitment and willingness to give so readily of their time is laudable. As a result, they are focused on school improvement and a high quality of education for all pupils.
- Pupils behave very well both in lessons and around the school. They are courteous, well mannered and helpful. Pupils have a positive approach to their work and are keen to learn. They listen carefully to adults and to their classmates. They ask and answer questions with confidence. Your lunchtime arrangements are impressive. Due to the size of the school, all pupils are able to dine together. Pupils take on various roles. They set the table and ensure that everyone is served and has enough to eat. They talk about their morning and do not leave the table until everyone is finished, and all of the dishes have been cleared away. Pupils then ensure that the room is ready for the afternoon lessons before going out onto the yard to play. It was a pleasure to dine with them.
- Parents speak positively about how they are actively included in their children's education. They are aware of the standards expected and are grateful for the opportunities to be involved. Governors and other volunteers are excited by the recent development of a forest school. Thanks to the concerted efforts of some volunteers, you have been successful in securing support from the National Parks and local businesses to develop part of your school field. Governors, staff and parents, are prepared to 'roll their sleeves up and help out' because as one parent put it, 'we love our school'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of writing improves, by ensuring that pupils are consistently challenged to apply their English grammar, punctuation and spelling skills accurately and consistently in their writing in a variety of forms
- the teaching of reading is improved, so that pupils read more often, both

independently and with an adult, so that they widen their vocabulary

- the provision for pupils in Base 1 is reviewed so that the provision more effectively meets the needs of the pupils
- teachers' planning includes learning that regularly challenges the most able pupils to achieve the very best they can in all lessons.

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

Daniel Murray
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and two governors. I also met with your SENCo. Together, you and I visited classrooms to observe teaching and to look at pupils' work. I also looked in depth at pupils' books and other work. I spoke with a representative of the local authority by telephone. I met with all of the pupils in Base 1 and Base 2. I listened to four pupils read. I also listened informally to pupils read during my visits to lessons. Consideration was given to the eight free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. There were no responses to either the staff or the pupil questionnaires. I spoke to five parents at the start of the school day. I evaluated recent information in relation to pupils' progress throughout the school, the school's self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan. I also met with you as designated safeguarding leader and reviewed documentation and records about how you keep your pupils safe.