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Mr Christopher Boddy  
Headteacher  
White Mere Community Primary School  
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Dear Mr Boddy

### **Short inspection of White Mere Community Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 2 May 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 October 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have successfully steered the school through difficult circumstances created by changes in staffing. Well supported by the governing body, you continue to address rigorously any issues of underperformance and have brought together a skilled and enthusiastic teaching team. You have identified the strengths and current priorities for the school accurately. You detail further actions to address these priorities in the school development plan and you recognise that some of these initiatives are not consistently implemented across the school. You also acknowledge that the impact of these recent actions on outcomes for pupils is in its early stages, especially in writing.

You have raised the expectations for pupils' outcomes. You have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment through good-quality professional development for staff and sharing in good practice at other schools. These improvements are now accelerating the rates of progress pupils make in their learning. You keep a close eye on the quality of teaching, and your feedback to teachers links directly into focused school improvement planning and teacher appraisal. You acknowledge that some teachers do not always pitch work appropriately and so some activities do not fully challenge and stretch pupils. You have ensured that refinements to the tracking of pupils' progress lead to accurate analysis of their progress so far and identify whether pupils are on course to reach the standard expected for their age.

Governors have a good understanding of how well the school is doing. They come from a wide range of backgrounds and use their experience well to ask challenging and pertinent

questions of leaders. Effective systems and procedures are in place that allow governors to read reports in good time prior to their meetings. This helps them formulate the important questions they wish to ask leaders. Governors agree that they need to keep a closer eye on how well pupils are progressing across the wider curriculum, as well as making sure that the school's plans clearly state how opportunities will be provided to further challenge the most able pupils.

Pupils told me that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe. This view supports my inspection findings; I observed happy, content and friendly faces throughout the school. Older pupils set a good example to their younger peers through the work they do as members of the school council. Consequently, pupils enjoy coming to school and look forward to the varied and rich topics that are being introduced into the curriculum.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You, your deputy headteacher and two further members of staff undertake the role of the designated safeguarding lead effectively. Policies, procedures and records are of high quality, up to date and fit for purpose. Summary records of incidents of concern are meticulously kept. Records confirm there are very few incidents of misbehaviour or alleged bullying. Pupils spoken with categorically state that no bullying happens at White Mere Primary School. All staff receive appropriate training and have a secure understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding pupils.

Pupils enjoy school and attendance is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after. They have complete faith that adults in school will listen to them if they are worried or would like to talk. They are confident that any rare issues of poor behaviour or mishaps in the playground will be dealt with fairly and firmly. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and during informal times are indicative of the strength of the school's work in this area. Relationships between adults and pupils are supportive and positive.

The culture of keeping pupils safe and putting them at the heart of the friendly school community is highly evident. The personal development and welfare of all pupils in the school remains of paramount importance to you and your staff. The vast majority of parents who made their views known report that their children are safe in school.

### **Inspection findings**

- Since your recent appointment you have been steadfast in your determination to improve the progress that pupils make in their learning and the standards that they are capable of reaching. You have taken swift and effective action, ably supported by the governing body, to address any underperformance rigorously and eradicate underachievement.
- Governors are skilled in their roles and know the journey the school is on and the actions taken to reach this point. They are very well informed, take nothing at face value, question and challenge very effectively, and are fully engaged in putting into place key actions to move the school forward even more rapidly.
- Teachers' ongoing assessments and monitoring of pupils' successes or misunderstandings in their work allow planned activities to be amended or changed, or

extra support deployed. Ensuring that pupils, especially the most able, are always sufficiently challenged is an area you are continuing to address. Teaching seen during the inspection and analysis of work in books suggest that some teachers provide adequate challenge for all pupils but this is not a consistent practice across the school. Challenge is especially limited in writing in key stage 1 and for the most able pupils and the most able disadvantaged pupils.

- Children get off to a fast start in their learning in the early years. Nursery and Reception children play and learn happily alongside each other, sticking at tasks and maintaining their concentration. Adults support children's learning well. Indoors, they use effective questioning and provide a range of activities to support children's writing and understanding of number. However, opportunities to explore number in the outdoor environment are limited. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is now above the national average.
- Pupils get off to a good start in their reading. The systematic teaching of phonics starts in Reception and continues into key stage 1. Some pupils read fluently to the inspector during visits to classes. Pupils read widely and often, and are developing a love of reading. Pupils in key stage 2 are developing good skills of inference and deduction when reading.
- Work in pupils' books is generally presented well, although there are inconsistencies in some classes. Handwriting is mostly neat and legible. There are detailed plans in place to improve pupils' spelling. Pupils are regularly given opportunities to write at length, often linked to the class topic.
- Leaders are managing pupil premium spending effectively to provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils. This support is regularly evaluated for its impact on pupils' learning, and amended as a result. The positive impact of this support is seen through the improving progress made by current disadvantaged pupils across the school. Differences are diminishing between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally with the same starting points, and have been eliminated between them and their peers in school in some year groups. The school acknowledges that further work is still required to accelerate this group of pupils' progress, and especially that of the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an unmistakable strength of the school. Pupils' behaviour and conduct during lessons and outside at playtimes are good. Pupils behave respectfully and with consideration for others.
- The majority of pupils are delightfully proud of their school and find it enjoyable. Pupils are considerate of each other as well as adults, and playtimes are cheerful affairs. The environment is secure and well looked after, with an enticing range of opportunities for play and exploration. The manner in which pupils move around the school is calm and lunchtimes are harmonious.
- Teachers' ongoing assessments and monitoring of pupils' successes or misunderstandings in their work allow planned activities to be amended or changed. You are addressing the need for teachers to stretch the most able pupils more thoroughly in areas such as mathematics and writing. Nevertheless, these pupils are still not consistently challenged in their learning.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers' expectations are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities and provide suitable challenge for all, especially for the most able pupils
- an increased proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are working at a greater depth
- the rates of progress that pupils make in their learning are accelerated, especially in writing and spelling

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

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Seagrove  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher. You and I visited lessons in key stage 2. I met with two members of the governing body and the school's local authority improvement partner. I spoke to pupils about their work and their views of the school. I listened to some pupils read and looked at some pupils' work in their workbooks with you when in lessons. Various documents were considered relating to safeguarding and external evaluations of the school. I examined the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, the school's monitoring of its own performance and its assessment and tracking of current pupils' progress. I also scrutinised pupils' achievement in the 2017 statutory assessments, responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, and the school's website.