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25 January 2016

Mrs Helen Hesketh
Scorton C of E Primary School
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Dear Mrs Hesketh

Short inspection of Scorton C of E Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 January 2016, 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 May 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You, your staff and governors have created the most welcoming atmosphere, where pupils have a strong sense of belonging and can thrive. Developing the quality of teaching and learning has been at the heart of your work since you accepted the role of headteacher. The needs of every pupil are well known by yourself and staff and you all work tirelessly to ensure that pupils have the support they need to be successful. As a result, pupils are happy, confident and their outcomes continue to improve. You have managed the maternity leaves of two senior members of teaching staff very well since the last inspection. It is to your credit that you have managed to sustain the good quality of education in the school during their absence.

The previous inspection report identified the need to make improvements in the teaching of phonics (the sounds made by letters) to improve pupils' early reading skills. You have introduced a new programme of phonics teaching which is now firmly established and, along with effective staff training, has resulted in a sharp improvement in pupils' early reading skills. You have also ensured that the quality of teaching in the early years and in Key Stage 1 is consistently good and frequently better. The systems to monitor and evaluate the school's work have also been sharpened and are robust. You, governors and middle leaders share this responsibility well and leadership at all levels is effective because procedures are clear and understood by all.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and meet requirements. You make sure that staff are kept up to date by completing regular training and confirming that they read all new safeguarding information and policies. There is a strong culture of safety in the school but you are not complacent. Governors complete regular checks on the effectiveness of procedures and this helps to maintain a keen focus on safeguarding. Pupils feel safe and are taught how to stay safe, including when using the internet. This is a view shared by every parent who responded to the Parent View questionnaire. You and governors also ensure that all recruitment procedures and checks are appropriately completed.

Inspection findings

- This is an improving school which is very well led. You, staff and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and where it can improve. You are constantly reviewing your practice to see what is working well. If something is not working you do not dwell on this; rather, you find solutions by thinking creatively. Teachers and other staff have high expectations for all pupils to succeed. They do not waste time teaching pupils what they can already do. Instead, they grasp the nettle and address the more challenging areas of learning because they know that this will make the biggest difference. Leaders expect even the youngest pupils to take pride in their learning and help them to understand what they need to do next. Pupils work very well together, sharing their ideas and learning, and are adept at realising what they need to do next to improve.
- Middle leaders are now key players in setting expectations and monitoring standards across the curriculum. They meet with staff regularly to complete training, check pupils' learning in books and to share ideas for further improvement in teaching. They make arrangements for teachers to visit each other's classrooms so that the strongest practice can be shared between them. Middle leaders are well aware of pupils who are not making the progress expected of them. They meet with teachers regularly to arrange extra help for pupils, and, as a result, pupils catch up quickly.
- Pupils make strong progress in writing across the school because they are well aware of how to become more effective writers. Pupils have writing targets which they use regularly to improve their work. They also respond well to the clear messages given by teachers when marking pupils' work. The teaching of writing is viewed as a strength, and evidence witnessed on inspection confirms that your view is accurate.
- You also correctly identify that pupils' behaviour is a key strength. This was a strong aspect in the previous inspection and you have maintained this position. Expectations for behaviour are high and adults are excellent role models of exemplary behaviour. Relationships between adults and pupils and between the

pupils themselves are consistently excellent. You have established a harmonious place of learning, a place where pupils and staff are proud to belong.

- Children make strong progress in the early years. They settle quickly into school life and are well supported in their learning by skilled staff and also by the older children in their class. Already, they demonstrate high levels of independence in their learning, are resilient and persevere well to complete activities. Typically, children enter the early years with skills expected for their age and make rapid progress in all areas. Consequently, they are well prepared for learning in Year 1 due to the solid foundation of learning in their first year.
- The needs of all groups of pupils are met well because of your focus on every pupil achieving their potential. More-able pupils say that they feel challenged in lessons because teachers know what they can already do and push them further. They have opportunities to work with more-able pupils from other schools and older pupils also attend 'masterclasses' at the local high school to broaden and deepen their understanding of topics. Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding are also well supported to achieve well academically. You also ensure that they do not miss out on any opportunities to develop wider skills, such as learning how to play a musical instrument.
- Pupils make particularly strong progress in reading and writing. Although they also make good progress in mathematics, this is not quite as strong as the progress made in reading and writing. This is something you are aware of and is a priority in your improvement plan. We discussed how staff have started to use more challenging activities to develop problem solving and reasoning for more-able pupils in one class and how these activities need to be developed more widely to secure more rapid progress in mathematics for pupils in all classes.
- Governors work very closely with you and know the school well. They maintain their focus on priority areas for improvement and share your ambition for the school. They are heavily involved in improvement planning and provide you with a good mix of support and challenge.
- The local authority has provided effective support and challenge. They have provided support in school development planning, the appointment of new staff and in monitoring the quality of provision.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that all pupils have more opportunities to develop skills in reasoning and problem solving in mathematics to further improve outcomes.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ian Hardman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the literacy leader, the early years leader, the local authority adviser, five governors including the Chair of the Governing Body and a group of five pupils. I spoke with other pupils informally, both in and outside of classrooms. I considered a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan, governors' meeting minutes, documents relating to safeguarding and information relating to pupils' progress. I visited all classes with you to observe pupils' learning and to speak with them about their learning. I also considered the responses of 13 parents who completed the online Parent View questionnaires and a sample of some recent parental questionnaires completed for school leaders.