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Mr Steven McLean
Headteacher
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Dear Mr McLean

Short inspection of Caedmon Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 September 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 November 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 culture of high aspirations, expectations and standards that you have established since your appointment as headteacher. School leaders, including governors, have a shared commitment to providing high-quality teaching and learning, and to deliver the best possible outcomes for the pupils in their care. The introduction of the 'Caedmon Characteristics' is a demonstrable expression of the aspirational vision that you have for the school community. You and your leaders model the Caedmon characteristics of 'be friendly', 'respect others', 'work hard' and 'never give up'. Your pride in your pupils and staff is reciprocated as they value, most highly, your passion and drive. As a result of this strong leadership and effective teaching, pupils make good progress.

Leaders have created an open, honest and friendly school. Pupils are at the heart of everything that leaders and staff do. Pupils are happy, friendly and well mannered. Leaders' knowledge of each pupil is impressive and this enables a more personalised approach to pupils' academic and social development. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave very well, exemplifying leaders' high expectations. Pupils listen carefully to their peers and teachers, showing respect for others.

At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors recognised the many strengths of the school. They also identified the need to improve pupils' handwriting and the use of imaginative vocabulary when they write. Leaders have introduced an effective

new handwriting programme. As a result, pupils are learning to write in a neat and legible style. You have also engaged the help of other professionals, such as a speech and language therapist, to develop your pupils' vocabulary.

The previous inspection report stated that the level of challenge and expectation for the most able pupils should be increased so that they make more rapid progress. You have taken steps to tackle this issue. However, in 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average.

Leaders have correctly identified the need to increase the number of children exceeding the early learning goals. As a result, you are increasing their access to books. Opportunities to read, both independently and with adults, are a key element of this improvement. Leaders' plans to develop a 'reading hut' and the introduction of 'Free Choice Fridays' are among the new initiatives that you have introduced to address these issues. It is too early, however, to measure the impact of these reading incentives.

You and your leadership team have correctly identified the need to further develop the science curriculum. Leaders, including governors, have worked to build links with local businesses and secondary schools to ensure that pupils are given opportunities in science outside the classroom. Pupils enjoy these experiences. However, there are plans in place to monitor the impact of science teaching more effectively. In some instances, pupils' scientific misconceptions are not consistently well addressed and opportunities to develop pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar in science are missed.

School leaders are ambitious for their pupils and resolute in their desire to continually improve the quality of teaching and learning. Staff are challenged and supported to improve their practice. However, the level of challenge and support is variable and does not always help teachers to improve the quality of their teaching.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and staff at Caedmon Primary School make safety a priority. Pupils rightly say that they feel safe and happy at school and parents and carers agree. Leaders have developed highly effective policies and procedures to ensure that the pupils in their care are safe. Your designated safeguarding leader is meticulous in his record keeping and tenacious in following up all issues regarding vulnerable pupils and families. He is focused on the best interests of the children in your care, challenging professionals to ensure that the welfare of your pupils is paramount.

Staff and governors receive up-to-date training on key safeguarding issues and the appropriate use of social media. In-school monitoring systems are used effectively and adults are confident in the action that they need to take if they have concerns about a pupil's welfare.

Pupils say that bullying is rare. They are confident that adults will respond to any concerns that they have quickly and effectively. Pupils play happily together at playtimes.

Inspection findings

- You, your staff and governors have a clear focus on raising aspirations to improve outcomes for all pupils. You work collectively to ensure that by the end of Year 6, your pupils are ready for the challenges of secondary school.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 are consistently well above the national average. The vast majority of pupils make at least the progress they should across these subjects.
- Most pupils attend very regularly because they really enjoy coming to school. The vast majority of pupils exemplify the 'Caedmon Characteristics' and have extremely positive attitudes to their work. They listen carefully and try their best. They want to do well.
- Governors visit the school regularly and make checks to see how well the school is doing. They ask pertinent, astute questions to challenge leaders and focus their thinking. This involvement helps to drive improvements.
- Leaders have not been successful in developing a 'love of reading' across the school. Children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 do not have enough opportunities to improve their reading. Younger children do not always have reading books that are closely matched to their reading ability. Teachers and teaching assistants in early years do not plan activities that enable children to apply their reading skills. While reading is prioritised by leaders, many younger pupils do not read regularly enough with adults. This hinders their fluency, understanding and confidence.
- You have developed an effective approach to phonics teaching. Pupils are engaged in their phonics learning because tasks are appropriately pitched to their stage of development. Pupils can see the progress they are making and are proud of their achievements.
- Supported by your governing body, you have made considerable improvements to the outdoor area for early years. This area now offers a wide range of opportunities for children to use and apply their newly acquired skills. The early years leader has established systems and routines that are supporting staff in meeting the differing needs of children effectively. However, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception was below the national average in 2017 and 2018.
- Children are well cared for. Rules and routines are well established so that children listen carefully to adult instructions and generally concentrate well.
- Your open and welcoming approach encourages parents to come into school. Open meetings and 'stay and play' events help parents to feel involved in their child's learning. Your willingness to support parents through home visits is indicative of your unwavering commitment to working in partnership with families for the benefit of their children.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment of reading, specifically in early years and key stage 1, is improved
- the level of challenge and support from leaders to support and challenge staff to improve their practice is increased
- the most able pupils are provided with more challenge, and a higher proportion of them achieve greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics
- within science, pupils' misconceptions are addressed consistently and pupils are given opportunities to develop their spelling, punctuation and grammar.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Redcar and Cleveland. 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, your senior leadership team and a group of governors, including the chair and vice-chair. Together with you, we visited classrooms to observe teaching and to look at pupils' work. We also looked in depth at pupils' reading records, writing books and other work. Consideration was given to four free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 20 questionnaire responses from staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. I evaluated recent information in relation to pupils' progress throughout the school, the school's self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan and a sample of coaching and monitoring records. I also met with your designated safeguarding leader and reviewed documentation and records about how you keep your pupils safe.