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Mrs Alison Gargan
Headteacher
Byerley Park Primary School
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Dear Mrs Gargan

Short inspection of Byerley Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 November 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 September 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Senior leaders' and governors' analysis of the school's effectiveness is honest and accurate.

You and your team reacted promptly to a sharp decline in the progress made by key stage 2 pupils in reading last year. Pupils appreciate the renewed emphasis on reading. They told me that they are reading more at school and at home. They particularly enjoy completing the challenges in the school's new online reading tool.

You have worked hard to develop a curriculum that engages and excites the pupils. Pupils enjoy writing and attain very high standards by the end of Year 6. A parent told me that their child's writing had been 'nurtured and encouraged'. As a result, he has progressed from writing two or three lines reluctantly to writing over a page of correctly punctuated text about topics that 'inspire' him.

Staff are overwhelmingly supportive of your leadership and are proud to work at Byerley Park. The large majority of parents agree that the school provides well for their children. Parents and children appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school.

At the last inspection, you were asked to focus on improving the quality of teaching and the quality of leaders' activities to check on the work of the school. I found that pupils across the school know what they are learning, are eager to answer questions and are proud of the progress they are making. They concentrate for sustained periods of time and access resources such as dictionaries independently. You provided evidence that leaders make regular checks on the work of the school and provide verbal and written feedback to teachers. Although improved, leaders' analysis of the progress made by groups of pupils in lessons is not yet sufficiently forensic.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are made and recorded systematically. You ensure that staff and governors are appropriately trained so that they know how to keep pupils safe from harm. As the designated safeguarding lead, you work proactively with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils access appropriate and timely support. Pupils' attendance is above average. Records show your tenacity in following up children that go missing from education, even if only for a short time.

Inspection findings

- Children settle quickly into the Reception Year because of the effective partnership work between school staff and parents. Children feel happy and secure within the environment. They understand the routines, enjoy their learning and become more independent quickly. Children carry out learning tasks independently over sustained periods of time. For example, in the indoor role-play area, four beautifully dressed elves wrapped Christmas presents diligently. Early years staff assess children's skills and abilities accurately and plan activities and experiences that enable children to thrive and make good progress. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of Reception Year has increased year on year and is now well above average.
- This good start continues through key stage 1. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points to reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above average over time. Teachers are adept at identifying when pupils do not understand a new concept straight away. They deploy teaching assistants effectively to provide extra support where necessary.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength of the school. The proportion of pupils who achieve the standard in the Year 1 screening check on phonics is above average year-on-year. Less-able pupils in key stage 1 use their skills in phonics to read previously unknown words correctly. Pupils are prepared well to access key stage 2 reading materials. The most able readers have a thirst for reading and appreciate their teachers' work to improve pupils' ability to infer and deduce meanings from the text. They told me that they enjoy being 'text detectives'.

- Reading has been a strength of the school over time. Leaders were extremely disappointed with the statutory reading test results in 2016 and took immediate action to improve the provision for reading across the school. Pupils enjoy accessing the new online reading books and challenges in school and at home. The school's records show that pupils are reading more this term than they have during previous terms. Teachers have noted an increase in the pupils' skills and fluency. Leaders' initial analysis of the end-of-term assessments for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils indicate that pupils are making better progress this year than for the same period last year.
- Teachers know their pupils well. They quickly identify pupils who are in danger of falling behind and provide closely targeted intervention activities to enable them to catch up rapidly. You and I observed some very effective teaching in the early years, key stage 1 and upper key stage 2. This teaching challenged all pupils to do their very best. These pupils are making good progress. Although teaching is good overall, it is inconsistent in key stage 2. During the inspection, you noticed that some learning in lower key stage 2 did not start promptly after the pupils' morning break and valuable learning time was lost. We also noted that pupils in some classes in key stage 2 are adept at completing calculations correctly, but do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their knowledge and skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Pupils' attendance is high. Pupils like school, behave well and want to learn. They respect, like and trust their teachers. Pupils are mature and responsible. They enjoy undertaking duties of responsibility, such as Year 6 pupils 'buddying' younger pupils in the playground. Pupils told me that there are some behaviour incidents and very occasional incidents of bullying. They are confident that you and the other adults in school tackle all incidents quickly and sensitively. Pupils have a comprehensive knowledge of how to stay safe online because they get regular updates and reminders from staff.
- There is a very small number of disadvantaged pupils in school. Their work books and the school's internal assessment systems show that this group of pupils is making good progress in writing and mathematics. Their progress in reading reflects that of their peers in school. It is not good enough and is an area that the school is working proactively to address.
- There is also a very small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Overall, the school makes effective provision for these pupils. However, as identified by leaders, more work needs to be done in lower key stage 2 to adapt activities for these pupils and to assess their writing accurately.
- Pupils have a comprehensive knowledge about how to stay safe online. They told me that they feel very safe in school and their parents agree overwhelmingly. Pupils' behaviour is good in and around school. However, governors are unable to carry out their support and challenge role effectively because they do not receive information about the small number of incidents of poor behaviour that do occur.

- Governors, through their strategic oversight, have a deep understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development in relation to pupils' outcomes. Governors support leaders and challenge them robustly to improve pupils' outcomes further. They are knowledgeable about the activities under way to improve reading and are anxious to measure improvement following assessments at the end of the autumn term. Governors understand that pupils' behaviour is good. Governors ensure that the school's website is compliant with statutory requirements. They are proactive in seeking training to address the gaps they identify in their skills, such as understanding the new inspection dashboard.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the impact of the new initiatives to improve key stage 2 pupils' achievement in reading is reviewed at the end of the autumn term and regularly thereafter
- aspects of individual teachers' practice are refined through bespoke feedback and support from leaders
- the checks that are made on pupils' progress in their work books and in lessons include the progress made by groups of pupils such as the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- any trends in behavioural incidents are identified, addressed and reported to governors.

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

Yours sincerely

Belita Scott
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I focused on the following key lines of enquiry during the inspection:

- Is safeguarding effective?
- Does the provision in the Reception class enable children to make good progress from their starting points?
- Are pupils making good progress in reading in key stage 2?
- Does the curriculum meet the needs of all pupils from their starting points, especially for mathematics in key stage 2?

- Is the provision for the small numbers of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational and/or disabilities good?
- Is leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness accurate and based upon robust evidence?

I discussed the work of the school with you, the leader of the early years, subject leaders and six governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I checked a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I examined information about pupils' achievement together with external evaluations of aspects of the school's work and minutes of meetings of the governing body. I considered 71 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and 13 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. I visited all classes to observe teaching, learning and assessment, alongside you. I checked the progress made by pupils in their work books, talked formally to a group of six pupils and talked more informally to pupils in lessons and at breaktime about their learning. I also listened to pupils from Years 1, 3 and 6 read.