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Mr Wayne Myers
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mr Myers

Short inspection of Richardson Dees Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 2017, 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 March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Working alongside a supportive governing body, your experience and skilful leadership has brought about improvements to teaching and learning. There is a tangible drive and sense of urgency to provide high-quality opportunities that allow pupils to thrive, an ambition shared by all staff. You have rigorously addressed issues of underperformance and have brought together a skilled and enthusiastic teaching team.

You accurately identified the school's strengths and priorities and have developed appropriate actions in the school development plan. You recognise that some of the actions you list could be more precise so that governors can keep a closer check on the impact of your work on outcomes for pupils. You have brought a steady hand during recent staffing changes, skilfully minimising any negative impact on pupils' outcomes. Improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now accelerating the rates of progress of current pupils, including those who had fallen behind. You and other school leaders closely monitor the quality of teaching. You acknowledge that the new whole-school initiatives and strategies to further improve teaching are not yet fully embedded in every class.

You have successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Teaching is far more consistent; pupils' progress and attainment have improved, especially in key stage 1. Most pupils are now making strong progress. Teachers use questioning well and the pace of learning secures pupils'

concentration in lessons. Pupils respond well to the additional tasks and challenges provided to consolidate their understanding. Teachers' feedback clearly indicates how work can be improved, which deepens pupils' understanding effectively. Pupils have a strong work ethic and show high levels of independence and cooperation in lessons. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use technical vocabulary to support pupils' learning well. Most pupils in each year group are on track to reach standards expected for their age by the end of the academic year.

Safeguarding is effective.

You effectively undertake the role of the designated safeguarding leader. Policies, procedures and records are of high quality and are up to date. Summary records of incidents of concern are meticulously kept. There are very few records of behaviour incidents or alleged bullying, and pupils categorically state that no bullying happens at Richardson Dees. All staff are appropriately trained and have a secure understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding.

Pupils are very knowledgeable about bullying and e-safety. Pupils know how to stay safe and free from worries while in school. They understand how to avoid situations that may prove dangerous when not at school.

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 is a key area of focus for the school. The vast majority of parents report that their children are safe in school.

Inspection findings

- You have taken determined and rigorous actions to accelerate the progress of current pupils following the disappointing results for key stage 2 pupils in the school's 2016 assessments. You have been ably supported by the recently strengthened leadership team and the governing body.
- Work seen in pupils' books during the inspection and analysis of the school's tracking data clearly demonstrate strong progress over the autumn term for nearly all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes pupils across key stage 2 who are rapidly catching up to reach levels expected for their age.
- 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.
- Pupils in Year 2 and 3 read well to the inspector and were able to build and blend unknown words. The school's own tracking data shows that pupils' progress in reading is accelerating rapidly and a much greater proportion of pupils than in previous years are on track to meet the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1.
- Teachers' ongoing assessments and monitoring of pupils' successes or misunderstandings in their work ensures planned activities are amended or

changed, or extra support deployed to help pupils achieve. Teachers' feedback consolidates pupils' understanding effectively. Ensuring that teachers' expectations are always high and that pupils are set sufficiently challenging work, particularly in mathematics, and for the most able pupils, is an area you are, rightly, continuing to address.

- Pupils are attentive in lessons and have largely excellent attitudes to learning. Relationships are strong. Pupils know how well they are doing and the next steps they need to take to do even better. Pupils value the feedback they get from teachers.
- You have many strategies to encourage and celebrate pupils' regular and punctual attendance. These strategies are working well for the vast majority of pupils.
- Children get off to a good start in their learning in early years. Nursery and Reception children play and learn happily alongside each other, maintaining their concentration for sustained periods. Reception-aged children were observed readily taking turns and including a child in Nursery in their play, stating that, 'We look after the little ones.'
- Adults support children's learning well. They use effective questioning and provide a range of activities to support children's learning. There are many opportunities to explore and extend learning in the very well developed outdoor environment. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is now approaching the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers' expectations of pupils remain consistently high and that the work set challenges and stretches the most able pupils' thinking and understanding, especially in mathematics
- improvement actions noted in the school development plan are more precise so that governors can effectively check the impact of leaders' work on pupils' outcomes.

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 Tyneside. 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, the acting deputy headteacher, the mathematics leader and the special educational needs coordinator. I visited key stage 2 lessons with you to observe pupils' learning. I met with the chair, and other members, of the governing body. I spoke to pupils about their work and their views of the school, both in lessons and in meetings. I listened to some pupils read. I considered the views of parents from the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. A range of documents were considered relating to safeguarding, attendance, performance management, governors' meetings, and external evaluations of the school. I also analysed the school's development plan and self-evaluation, the curriculum, and tracking of current pupils' progress. I also scrutinised pupils' recent achievement in statutory assessments.