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Mrs Maggie Fearnley
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Fearnley

Short inspection of Roseberry Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 2019, 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 June 2015.

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 managed a period of staffing changes with great professionalism, and have remained unwaveringly determined to ensure that you provide the best possible educational experience for all pupils. Such high levels of staffing absence prompted a review of subject leadership across the school. To ensure that there was no lull in your focus for raising standards and improving practice, you have created leadership teams. This has increased the leadership capacity of the school, while providing less experienced members of staff the opportunity to develop their leadership skills alongside established colleagues.

Your self-evaluation is an adaptable document that encompasses improvement priorities well. It is reviewed regularly and updated, based upon any emerging needs identified through your monitoring activities. It demonstrates your precise understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas that need to improve further.

Since the last inspection, you have invested heavily in staff training, covering a range of educational foci. Staff value your investment in them and the opportunities you afford for them to become the best practitioners they can be. As a result, staff morale is high.

Pupils, equally, value your support. You have created a haven of safety and security for all pupils, but especially for your most vulnerable pupils. Pupils know they are

cared for, and know that they are respected and valued for the unique individuals they are. High levels of respect are the hallmark of the school. Pupils are courteous and welcome visitors with broad smiles. They readily hold doors open for adults and for each other, and offer a 'good morning' and 'you're welcome' to all. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary, and lessons are very rarely disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. This is because of your high expectations for pupils to respect the differences of others. You have created a truly inclusive school that is an oasis of calm and support. Pupils' best interests are at the heart of all decision-making.

You ensure that all pupils get off to a great start each day, by offering every pupil breakfast. This is exceptionally well organised, with older pupils serving toast and cereal in all classes. More importantly, pupils are alert for their lessons and keen to learn. You know that you have more to do to increase pupils' self-assurance and raise aspirations. You have recently developed attitudinal 'avatars' to encourage pupils to show resilience, and to be active team members among others. As a result, you have nurtured a happy school, in which pupils are thriving.

Governors are passionate about their roles. They are ambitious for the school's future and wholly supportive of the work of staff. A review of records of their meetings indicate the level of challenge offered when needed. Governors use their skills wisely, and access regular training to ensure that they fulfil their roles effectively. Detailed headteacher reports, and a strong role in monitoring, enable governors to have a very good understanding of the strengths in practice, and the areas for further improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding processes are fit for purpose. Thorough employment checks are undertaken on anyone wishing to work at the school, to ensure that they are fit to do so. The records of this are well maintained and regularly checked for compliance by the safeguarding governor.

Staff access regular training to ensure that they are up to date with the most recent statutory guidance and any pressing local issues. All staff questioned were very aware of the important role they play in keeping pupils safe. They could confidently explain the process they must follow should they have any concerns. 'Child spot' briefings, every week, ensure that all staff are equipped with essential knowledge surrounding the most vulnerable pupils.

The designated safeguarding officer is vigilant in reporting any concerns and in noticing any changes in pupils' demeanour. She maintains detailed notes and a detailed chronology of events. She does not shy away from giving professional challenge to other agencies if she believes it is in the pupils' best interests to do so.

Inspection findings

- Pupils' progress in reading has fluctuated over time. My first line of enquiry was to review leaders' actions to improve this. I found that staff have undertaken considerable training on the teaching of reading, some of which has been brokered with the local authority. Staff have valued this support. It has helped them to have a better understanding of the sequences of learning needed to support pupils' wider reading skill development. Consequently, teachers in all classes are confident in the teaching of reading and are consistent in their approach.
- Following a detailed analysis of pupils' reading outcomes, leaders implemented a new approach to teaching of reading comprehension. It consists of whole-class, teacher-led sessions that focus upon analysing the vocabulary choices and the language techniques made by authors from a range of well-chosen texts. Generally, pupils' vocabulary choices are broadening, and pupils are demonstrating increasing confidence to answer questions about texts. Consequently, this is leading to improving pupils' attainment at the expected standard. However, improvements at the higher standard are slower to embed. A review of teaching revealed a lack of challenge, in some classes, in making pupils think hard about their learning, and the accuracy of their own word choices. For example, in one class pupils offered 'sharp' as an adjective to describe a bow and arrow. This was accepted by the teacher. While this was not wholly inappropriate, it did not represent the accuracy and precision needed for pupils to successfully acquire a greater depth of understanding.
- Although only limited phonics sessions were seen during the inspection, it is clear from listening to pupils read, and from observing pupils in class, that pupils are acquiring an age-appropriate phonic knowledge and can apply these skills independently. Pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check are sustained from those seen in 2018. Year 2 catch-up phonics is enabling pupils unsuccessful in the Year 1 screening check to improve their phonic knowledge.
- A range of reading interventions are in place to support those pupils who are less confident in their reading to catch up. Online resources are particularly appealing to pupils, who spoke about their enjoyment of the activities they complete. As a result of pupils' participation in these programmes, they are improving their reading ages, reading stamina and reading speed.
- Leaders have also focused upon increasing pupils' reading enjoyment. Investment in new book stock, regular class stories, appealing reading corners in all classrooms and the school library bus are all contributing to this effectively. Parents value the workshops offered by teachers that give ideas on how to help at home. Those pupils who are not supported at home are heard to read more regularly in school.
- Another focus for the inspection was to review how effectively children's early literacy skills of reading and writing are developed in the early years. Although the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception has improved over time, it remains slightly below the national average, with no children exceeding this. I found that the early years leader monitors both

Nursery and Reception classes regularly to ensure that all areas of learning are vibrant, and offer children opportunities to practise their early reading and writing skills. Adult-led sessions are very focused and promote children's literacy skills effectively. These sessions broaden children's vocabulary and develop children's writing skills successfully. However, some free-choice activities lack the same level of precision. They resemble play rather than enabling children to consolidate their early literacy skills successfully. For example, a group of boys spent a long time in small world and construction creating a garage and racetrack, but were not, for example, encouraged to make signs and posters or to look at books on cars.

- A further focus for the inspection was to review procedures for managing pupils' absence. Over time, rates of pupils' absence had increased to be above the national average, as had the proportion of pupils regularly absent from school. As a result of the dedicated work of the educational welfare officer and the parent support adviser, combined with your steely determination, actions are now taking hold. Current overall absence rates, and the proportion of pupils regularly away from school, are declining, and are now lower than the national averages. This represents a considerable improvement.
- My final focus for the inspection was to review the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Over time, their progress in reading, writing and mathematics has been below average. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is knowledgeable and diligent in her role. She has already identified that some targets set to measure the progress of pupils with SEND are too broad to be evaluated precisely. To improve this process, she has introduced a more focused target-setting system. This is beginning to demonstrate the small steps in achievement of pupils with SEND more effectively. However, it is not embedded across the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils are challenged to widen their vocabulary and think hard about their learning, so that they can be more precise in their word choices and deepen their understanding of a range of texts
- free-choice activities within the early years are used, whenever possible, to consolidate children's early literacy skills
- new target-setting approaches for pupils with SEND are embedded across all year groups.

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

Yours sincerely

Diane Buckle
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and senior leaders, including the SENCo and English subject leaders, to discuss aspects of your work. You shared your own evaluations of the effectiveness of the school and your improvement plans. I observed pupils' learning in lessons together with you and the assistant headteacher, and reviewed work in pupils' books. I reviewed current pupils' assessment information.

I analysed a range of documents including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. I talked to pupils about their learning during lesson observations and at lunchtime. I heard a group of pupils read and talked to them more formally.

I took account of the 85 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 22 free-text commentaries. I met with three members of the governing body, including the vice-chair of the governing body, and met with a representative from the local authority.