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Mrs Alyson Bristow
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Dear Mrs Bristow

Short inspection of Newton-on-Trent CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 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 September 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Newton-on-Trent CofE Primary School is considerably smaller than the average-sized primary school. You have used this situation to form a strong sense of community. Staff know all pupils well as individuals. Relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils, are extremely positive. Pupils, parents and staff appreciate the collaborative and respectful atmosphere that permeates the school. You have created a culture where all feel valued and work together in the best interests of all pupils.

Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. They said that their teachers make learning fun and encourage them to use their imagination. Pupils appreciate the wide range of enriching experiences that they receive. For example, during the inspection, pupils animatedly described their participation in the 'Young Voices' concert. They were excitedly looking forward to a visit to the National Science and Media Museum. Pupils also value the opportunities they have to take on responsibilities such as the 'junior police cadet school officer' (JPCSO) role.

Pupils, including younger pupils, have a very good understanding of diversity. They understand different faiths and religions and are respectful of others' values and beliefs. Pupils are kind and caring. For example, they described the 'buddy bus stop', a bench in the playground where pupils can sit if they feel sad or upset. Pupils using it know that other pupils will support them or ask them to play. Pupils collaborate well in lessons and around school.

Parents are very positive about the school. They recognise that their children are happy, safe and well cared for. The vast majority of parents said that their children make good progress.

Since the last inspection there have been several changes to the composition of the governing body. A number of governors are new to their role and have received well-targeted training to support them to carry out their responsibilities well. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for further improvement. They have the skills to hold leaders to account and do so effectively.

Following the last inspection, you simplified the system for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress. This has ensured that teachers have a detailed understanding of what pupils are able to do. They know where pupils need additional support and challenge to make further progress. The new assessment system has also strengthened discussions at meetings about pupils' progress. Teachers analyse pupils' attainment and discuss their progress with you. Together, you evaluate the impact of the support that pupils have received and agree what action needs to be taken to help and challenge all pupils. Teachers identify individual pupils' needs in their planning. They are particularly effective at supporting the least able pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, so that they make good progress. The most able pupils, however, are not always effectively challenged because teachers do not routinely move them onto more difficult work quickly enough. You have identified the need to ensure that more pupils achieve the higher standards by the end of key stage 2, and this remains a priority.

You have introduced a new approach to the teaching of writing. Teachers plan activities that cultivate pupils' imagination by creating scenarios to involve and inspire them. For example, pupils investigated the mysterious landing of an alien in the playground. They researched its potential origin and interviewed members of the local community before writing accounts of the event. A replica of the 'TARDIS' in the playground inspired pupils to write letters to Doctor Who to persuade him not to resign his post. Pupils said that they enjoy these activities because they help them to learn. Despite this improvement, too few of the most able pupils are supported to reach the higher standards in writing.

Staff promote reading strongly throughout the school and pupils make good progress in the early years and both key stages. You have encouraged a love of reading through the use of fiction texts that stimulate many activities in different subjects. These ensure that pupils are exposed to a wide range of authors and genres. The relocated library is central to the school, providing a warm and welcoming environment to promote reading. Plans are in place to extend this provision further.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff have received up-to-date training and they take their responsibilities

to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils seriously. Leaders have ensured that risk assessments are in place to support site security. Leaders take appropriate action when they have safeguarding concerns and involve external agencies when required. They ensure that referrals are followed up so that any support is put in place quickly. The positive relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils feel supported in all aspects of school life. They know that there is someone they can speak with in school if they have worries or concerns. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They recognise the difference between bullying and unkindness. Pupils said that bullying is rare but they were confident that staff would deal with any instances swiftly and effectively if they did occur.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have ensured that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The curriculum has considerable breadth and pupils experience a range of subjects as part of their usual timetable. For example, they learn French and take part in practical music sessions. You have used the primary physical education (PE) and sport funding to provide regular, high-quality PE. Enriching activities, such as the overnight 'camp Newton', develop pupils' social skills and independence. Pupils are involved in several transition events to ensure that they are confident to make the move to secondary school. Pupils also benefit from participating in events arranged as part of the Centurion Collaboration, an informal partnership with local schools. For example, pupils compete in the annual sports events. This enables them to interact with pupils from other schools, many of whom are their future peers.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers manage mixed-age classes well. They plan activities that excite and enthuse pupils of all ages and abilities. Careful planning means that pupils have access to the full curriculum, appropriate to their age. Pupils are keen to participate. Teachers make very good use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to help them to develop their reasoning skills. The most able pupils, however, are not moved onto more challenging work quickly enough. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are very well supported and make good progress. Children in the Reception Year make a good start to their school life. They are settled, happy and make very good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics but their progress in writing is slower, particularly in key stage 2. Teachers share success criteria with pupils to illustrate what they need to do to produce effective pieces of writing. All pupils, however, have the same criteria, regardless of their ability. It is therefore not clear how the most able pupils are expected to make progress towards the higher standards. Work in pupils' books shows that the most able pupils are not effectively challenged.
- The new approach to teaching writing has provided more opportunities for pupils to write for extended periods. In English lessons, pupils write in a variety of different genres. Enrichment activities also support pupils' writing development. For example, pupils worked with a visiting poet to create their own poetry. The use of extended writing is less effective in other subjects. Teachers do not ensure

that all pupils are challenged by their writing in other subjects. For example, in science, pupils of all abilities complete a simple worksheet to record their findings. They are therefore not supported to develop their analytical writing or investigational reporting.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers routinely plan activities to challenge the most able pupils
- teachers make it clear to pupils what they need to do to achieve the higher standards, particularly in writing, by the end of key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Deborah Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- The inspector held several meetings with you. She also spoke with an adviser from the local authority and the vice-chair of the governing body by telephone.
- The inspector made short visits to all classes with you and discussed the strengths and weaknesses observed.
- The inspector looked at a sample of pupils' workbooks from a range of subjects.
- The inspector spoke to pupils in a group and informally in their lessons
- Twenty-five responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and 22 free-text comments were considered. The inspector also spoke with a number of parents at the start of the day.
- The inspector met with a group of staff and considered the six responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- A range of school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour, attendance and safety. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and the lead inspector looked at the information published on the school's website.