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Mrs Phillipa Summers
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Summers

Short inspection of Grange CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You lead a welcoming and inclusive school with strong Christian values. Through initiatives such as working with the local foodbank and strong overseas links with a community in Nepal, you teach pupils to be caring and to treat all with respect. Parents and carers of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities value your support. They were very keen to tell me that you and your staff make great efforts to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum.

Your enthusiastic and hard-working governors share your ambitions to achieve the best for each and every pupil. Governors know the school well and keep a careful watch on how pupils achieve. Through regular training, governors keep their skills up to date. Governors visit the school often and provide just the right balance of challenge and support for leaders.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that learning is fun. This is because you and your staff have planned an interesting and engaging curriculum. Pupils relish the many visits and trips that you plan and enjoy after-school clubs, such as judo and gymnastics. They were keen to tell me about whole-school outdoor days to Castle Head Field Centre, which teach pupils how to develop their resilience and teamworking skills. A small number of parents raised concerns about the amount of homework that pupils receive. Those pupils that I spoke to told me that their homework is 'about right' and helps them with their learning.

You and your staff have addressed the issues raised at the last inspection. You have taken just the right steps to raise standards in reading, including phonics. Across the school, you provide a wide array of interesting and well-chosen books to engage pupils and it is clear that pupils read for pleasure. Teachers give pupils frequent opportunities to develop their reading skills. Pupils read regularly with adults and develop their comprehension of what they are reading. You check pupils' progress very carefully and give additional support to pupils who have gaps in their learning. You have made sure that parents know exactly how to support their children with reading at home and this has helped to improve pupils' progress.

Leaders place a high priority on staff development. You have enabled teachers to work collaboratively and learn from other schools and specialists. Teachers have plenty of opportunities to work together and share their strong practice. As a result of well-planned training, you have improved the quality of teaching, and standards have improved. From their varied starting points, most pupils make good progress through each key stage across the curriculum. You agree that there is still more to do to improve the progress of some pupils in aspects of English and mathematics in key stage 1.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have made sure that safeguarding arrangements are thorough and of high quality. Safeguarding takes a very high priority across the school. Leaders carry out statutory checks on the suitability of staff to work with children. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe both online and in the wider community. Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Through very regular training, staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. They know exactly what to do if there are any concerns about a pupil. Records relating to pupils' welfare are meticulously kept and of high quality. You work closely with other agencies, and parental involvement is appropriate.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, the first of which related to how well children learn in the early years. Classrooms in the Nursery and Reception are bright, attractive and calm. Teachers plan engaging activities which match the development needs and interests of children. Children use resources confidently and with good levels of concentration. In the outdoor area, a group of boys were working happily together to transfer water using buckets. Others were excitedly using large brushes to paint the climbing equipment with water. Inside, children were writing, addressing and posting letters to superheroes. Such activities enable children to make gains in social, physical and writing skills. Parents commented on how effectively teachers communicate with them and involve them in their children's learning. I found that, from their starting points, children make good progress through the early years and are well prepared for Year 1.
- During the inspection, I saw that you have taken prompt action to raise

standards in phonics. This was in response to a fall in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in Year 1 in 2017. Teachers and teaching staff have attended training in phonics and this has improved their teaching. Staff work closely together to make sure that pupils make good progress in their learning. Pupils use their phonics skills well to sound out unfamiliar words. Through regular reading with adults, pupils have frequent opportunities to develop these skills and make good progress.

- I also looked at the progress that pupils in key stage 1 make in their writing. I found that you have improved the teaching of writing. Pupils write for different purposes and evaluate their writing with their teacher. They use an appropriate range of punctuation. Most pupils make good progress. However, I found that teachers do not give the most able pupils enough opportunity to develop their skills in writing by writing at length. As a result, they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- My final focus was to look at how well pupils learn in mathematics. I found that the quality of teaching in mathematics has improved since the last inspection. This is because staff have worked closely with other professionals to develop their subject knowledge and improve their teaching strategies. The subject leader in mathematics has made sure that teachers and support staff are confident and skilled when delivering lessons and working with pupils. Across the school, pupils develop their understanding of number and their accuracy in carrying out calculations. Leaders have put in place strategies to develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. We agreed that, in key stage 2, these strategies are working well and pupils are making good progress, including the most able. Leaders are working on making the same improvements in key stage 1.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in mathematics, teachers give pupils in key stage 1 more opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills
- in writing, teachers give the most able pupils in key stage 1 more opportunities to develop skills in writing by writing at length.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Stevens
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and your leadership team. I also met with four governors, including the chair of governors. I met with eight pupils from key stage 2. I visited classes in each key stage with you, where I observed teaching and learning and spoke with pupils. I looked at pupils' work in a range of subject areas. I also heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.

I took account of responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including free-text responses. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, information about pupils' attainment and progress and teachers' performance management monitoring. I also evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep pupils safe, safeguarding checks and attendance information. I undertook a review of the school's website.