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Dear Mrs Stewart

Short inspection of Patterdale CofE School

Following my visit to the school on 15 September 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 April 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your teaching and leadership exemplify your school aims, 'to provide learning based on inspirational experiences' and 'ensure that Christian values are part of the everyday lives of all at the school'. Your ambitions for pupils' achievement, social and personal development are shared by staff and governors. Teaching staff know the pupils extremely well and provide interesting, relevant learning experiences that enable them to make good progress. Governors are knowledgeable and provide effective challenge and support for leaders. The strengths identified at the last inspection in pupils' behaviour and safety have been sustained; pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they develop excellent attitudes to learning. The school has a warm, welcoming atmosphere where pupils grow in confidence and are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

The areas for improvement that were identified at the last inspection have been dealt with successfully. Teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and reinforce their mathematical skills in different subjects across the curriculum. Marking is consistent across the school, so pupils understand how to improve their work.

You have adapted teaching and assessment to take account of the new curriculum. The more explicit teaching of English grammar, punctuation and spelling (EGPS) skills is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement in the EGPS test and is improving the quality of their writing. The new assessment system is not as helpful

in assessing pupils' depth of understanding and fluency in their mathematical skills, however. We agreed that it would be helpful to review the impact of the changes you have made on pupils' outcomes in mathematics.

Due to the very small cohorts of four or five pupils, pupils' overall attainment in standardised tests varies considerably from year to year. You have analysed past test results carefully, including the lower than expected progress and attainment of some pupils in the 2015 standardised tests in Year 6. Careful analysis of the barriers to learning and reflections on teaching have helped to raise standards. In 2016, all the Year 6 pupils made at least expected progress and achieved or exceeded the expected standard in the mathematics test. The proportions of pupils who attained the expected standard in the reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling tests and in writing were also above the national average for 2016. Pupils in Year 2 made good progress from their starting points to achieve expected standards or above for their age. Year 1 pupils consistently achieve well in the phonics screening check because phonics skills are taught effectively.

Children enter the Reception Year with varied pre-school experience, knowledge and skills. The children receive a warm welcome from staff and older children, so they settle quickly. They grow in confidence as they develop their skills in stimulating activities both in the classroom and the outdoor learning area. The early years provision builds on what children know and can do successfully, so children make good progress and are prepared well for the Year 1 curriculum.

Pupils who are currently in school continue to make good progress across key stages 1 and 2. Teachers know the pupils extremely well and adapt their teaching appropriately to take account of the wide age and ability range in each class. The work in pupils' books is at the standards expected for their age for the vast majority of pupils in subjects across the curriculum. Literacy and mathematical skills are developed well over the whole of each key stage. However, pupils' opportunities to explore numerical relationships and develop depth of understanding and fluency with number are not developed as fully as other aspects of mathematics in each year group.

You ensure that those who need it receive specialist or more intensive support. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of such support, especially in their language and social skills. The small number of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium benefit from additional support appropriate to their ability and access a range of enrichment opportunities. Their needs and potential barriers to learning are analysed thoroughly so the additional funding is well targeted. They make good progress academically and excellent progress socially and emotionally.

The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making better progress than they were previously, following training and a whole-school focus on raising expectations for this group. They make at least expected progress from their starting points to achieve securely at or exceed the standards expected for their age. The most able pupils say they find work interesting and with 'the right level of

challenge'. The pupils are productive and apply their knowledge and skills in subjects across the curriculum successfully.

The school is at the heart of the community and highly valued by parents. All of those who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire were extremely positive. Parents are highly satisfied with your leadership; they feel able to approach all staff and well informed about their children's progress. Typical comments were: 'The head takes time with every child and every family to make them feel like a valued part of the school' and 'I feel that the teachers know my children well and know how to get the best out of them.' Parents' positive views are confirmed by the inspection findings.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils feel and are safe in school. Your safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose and rigorously adhered to by all staff. Vetting procedures for the recruitment of staff and governors are thorough. You ensure that staff and governors receive appropriate training and regular updates so they understand their responsibilities, recognise risks and know what to do if they have any concerns. All are aware of the 'Prevent' duty and have ensured pupils know about the dangers of extremist views, appropriate to their age. You are proactive and tenacious in following up any concerns about pupils' safety and welfare and in ensuring multi-agency support that meets their needs.

Pupils make an excellent contribution to the harmonious, safe atmosphere in school. Older children look after the younger ones and all pupils behave safely around the school. Pupils contribute to risk assessments, which helps to heighten their awareness of potential hazards and ensures that they know what to do to minimise risk in school, when online and outside. All parents and pupils who made their views known feel that the school is safe and that pupils are well cared for. They say that bullying is rare and all agree that it is dealt with effectively if it does occur. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, having discussed issues in depth and contributed to the anti-bullying policy.

The vast majority of pupils have good attendance. There are a few, however, who are taken out of school during term time for holidays and visits abroad, and this has a considerable impact on overall attendance because of the small number on roll. You are working effectively with families and the incidence of such absence has reduced.

Inspection findings

- You have a clear vision to continue to improve the school and ensure that pupils achieve as well as possible. Given your commitment to teaching for most of the timetable, you have delegated leadership responsibilities effectively and provide good direction to keep on improving teaching and learning. All staff work closely together to share ideas and learning from the training they have attended.
- Governors provide effective challenge and support to leaders, based on their

detailed knowledge of the school and good understanding of their responsibilities. They have a good understanding of achievement information and gain insightful information from their involvement in school reviews with external partners. They attend training regularly and ensure that school policies and procedures are kept up to date.

- Your self-evaluation assesses the school's performance accurately and your development planning identifies the right priorities to further improve teaching and learning. All staff and governors contribute to evaluation and planning, so ideas and expertise are shared effectively.
- Staff performance is managed well and supported by good-quality professional development. Staff are highly positive about the collaborative leadership of the school and feel motivated and valued.
- Teaching has a good impact on learning over time. Staff's in-depth knowledge of pupils is a key strength in planning for the wide range of age and ability in the two classes. You and the key stage 1 teacher plan stimulating activities that help them to link learning across the curriculum.
- Good-quality curriculum planning ensures that pupils develop wide-ranging knowledge and skills in all subjects. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities they have for practical, investigative work. They apply their literacy and mathematical knowledge in other subjects successfully. Staff make good use of the local environment and provide a range of after-school activities and visits to enrich pupils' learning.
- Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted exceptionally well and reinforced through the ethos of the school. Pupils understand about different faiths and cultures in the wider community. They develop excellent social skills and learn about core values such as respect, democracy and rule of law because their views are taken into account in the day-to-day running of the school. For example, all have been able to contribute their ideas in devising the school rules, improving the environment and assessing risk.
- The additional sports funding is used appropriately to broaden pupils' participation and help them develop new skills. Pupils experience a wide range of sports through the Eden Valley Sports Partnership and they are rightly proud of their success in gymnastics competitions. The climbing equipment in the school grounds develops pupils' strength and agility as well as their confidence. You have evaluated the impact of the sports premium effectively.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. You have maintained the strong focus on promoting pupils' personal skills and the strong sense of community within the school that was evident at the last inspection. Pupils of all ages work and play together constructively. They say they love coming to school, feel their views are valued and each child is able to contribute to the running of the school.
- Partnership working with other schools in the Penrith Rural Cluster is effective. Your peer reviews enable staff and governors to share practice and ideas and gain from expertise in other schools. The local authority has had minimal involvement with the school, which is appropriate as there is capacity within the school and the cluster to sustain improvements.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they review the impact of the changes that have been made to curriculum planning and assessment in mathematics, particularly with regard to pupils' development of fluency and depth of understanding of numerical relationships
- the website is kept up to date and complies with government requirements.

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

Jean Olsson-Law
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I had meetings with you and all teaching staff, three governors and a group of the most able pupils. I observed teaching and learning in the two classes, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils during lessons and break-times. I spoke with parents at the school entrance and took account of 13 responses to 'Parent View', the Ofsted online questionnaire. I took account of three responses to the online questionnaire from staff. I looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment and at your self-evaluation and action planning. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe and records of training, safeguarding checks and behaviour management.

I considered the following lines of enquiry:

- how well leaders and governors have dealt with the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection and capacity to sustain improvements
- the quality and impact of safeguarding procedures
- whether pupils currently in school are sustaining the above-average performance evident in the 2016 key stage 2 assessments and the 2015 key stage 1 assessments
- the progress of different groups of pupils, especially the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the quality and impact of teaching in mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling across key stages 1 and 2
- how well provision in the early years develops children's skills.