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Ms Tracey Hart
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Hart

Short inspection of Tatworth Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 March 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.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Changes in staffing, including leadership roles, since the previous inspection have constrained efforts to secure consistently effective teaching across the school. They interrupted the development of the skills of middle leaders in improving the quality of teaching and learning. This was an area of improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. Consequently, pupils' performance in key stage assessments has fluctuated in recent years and has not kept pace with the raised expectations of the national curriculum.

You have acted decisively since your appointment as headteacher early last year. You have made good use of outside specialist advice to ensure that you tackle areas in need of improvement effectively. You have established a team approach to senior and middle leadership and ensure that everyone, including governors, is kept fully informed. This has strengthened leadership capacity and is helping to drive improvement. Developments in teaching, especially strengthened assessment and planning, and teachers' raised expectations, are improving pupils' progress. However, there is still work to be done to secure consistently good or better teaching across the school, particularly in reading and writing. Your next inspection will therefore be a section 5 inspection and will include ascertaining the effectiveness of your actions in bringing about and sustaining improvement in teaching.

Pupils behave well and relate supportively with each other during work and play. This shows the success of your work to promote and celebrate pupils' personal, as well as academic, achievement. Pupils are clearly proud of the school. Your curriculum promotes the school's priorities of 'love learning, work together, achieve and shine'. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their varied learning experiences and participate energetically in the wide range of opportunities provided for them. For example, pupils relish undertaking scientific investigations and designing animal habitats. They compete enthusiastically, and with notable success, in a wide range of sports. Pupils collaborate movingly in music events, as seen during the school's celebration assembly when they wholeheartedly 'sang as one'. Parents and carers value the school's inclusive ethos. Some express concern about the instability in staffing. Nevertheless, most support the view of one parent who wrote, 'Our daughter is thriving at the school.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, undertake meticulous checks to ensure that all safeguarding procedures and policies are kept up to date. They ensure that they are implemented effectively to keep pupils safe. These include detailed vetting of staff and regular visitors to the school, such as governors and volunteers, to secure their suitability to work with pupils.

The vast majority of parents, staff and pupils who responded to the questionnaires agree that pupils are kept safe and feel safe at school. All those who spoke with the inspector also supported this view. Typically, one parent wrote: 'My child feels very comfortable and safe in his learning environment and enjoys every day at school, thanks to the hard work of the staff.' Pupils described caring relationships between staff and pupils and expressed their full confidence in talking to a teacher if they had any concerns. The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' ability to express their views and to keep themselves and each other safe. For example, pupils work safely when using computers and accessing the internet. A small number of parents and pupils expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour. School records and comments from most parents, pupils and staff indicate significant improvement in behaviour over the past year.

Inspection findings

- The first line of enquiry considered how effectively leaders, at all levels, are bringing improvement to secure pupils' best possible progress through the school. Your committed and well-focused leadership is well supported by the deputy headteacher and committed governors. Your school self-evaluation and improvement plans identify the right priorities for improvement and show that you understand what needs to be done to bring this about. You ensure that governors receive accurate and detailed information. As a result, they are well informed and have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This has enhanced governors' ability to provide effective strategic guidance and challenge and support your drive for improvement. The actions you

have taken and appointments you have made have already strengthened leadership. You have improved teaching and learning, for example in mathematics and sport. Your newly formed team of subject leaders in English shares your ambition to improve teaching and learning in this subject. Outcomes in phonics are rapidly improving. Other well-targeted actions to further improve pupils' reading and writing skills are beginning to have an impact. Currently, your well-considered actions to raise standards at the end of Reception and Year 2 are not fully embedded and have yet to have similar impact.

- The second line of enquiry examined the effectiveness and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment of reading and writing across key stage 2. You have strengthened your procedures to track pupils' achievement as they move through the school. Leaders are now using the information gathered to identify barriers to learning. In particular, you are tackling gaps in pupils' previous learning, such as comprehension in reading and sentence construction in writing. You have strengthened the support provided for some pupils, including boys and disadvantaged pupils, who are at risk of not making progress.
- You have redistributed teachers to make better use of their skills. Careful monitoring and development of teaching and learning through key stage 2 this academic year have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can do. You have secured pupils' good engagement in learning by providing stimulating work. Teachers deepen pupils' thinking by challenging them to explain their ideas. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 6, especially the most able, read from and discussed challenging texts capably and confidently. Pupils' handwriting and presentation of work are much improved. Pupils are also benefiting from more opportunities to write for different purposes. As a result, increasing proportions of pupils across key stage 2 are now making better progress in reading and writing. However, there are still weaknesses in spelling.
- My final line of enquiry considered how well leaders and teachers are improving the achievement of pupils through early years and key stage 1 classes. Strengthened teaching of phonics and foundations for improving pupils' basic writing skills are now in place in these classes. Children in Reception have access to a widened range of indoor and outdoor experiences which are raising their interest in learning. However, children's learning across Reception and key stage 1 reflects inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning. In particular, pupils' progress and their ability to learn by using and applying skills for themselves are inconsistent. This is due to variation in teachers' expectations. You have recently improved the level of challenge in the work presented to pupils. This is in response to guidance from leaders and external consultants. You continue the focus on further improving pupils' achievements in basic skills by the end of Reception and Year 2.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- maintain the focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning and securing consistently good outcomes for all groups of pupils by the end of

Reception and Year 2

- ensure that teachers continue to improve pupils' progress and attainment in reading and writing by:
 - embedding the new approaches to reading and extending pupils' comprehension and vocabulary skills
 - improving pupils' ability to spell words accurately.

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

Yours sincerely

Alexander Baxter
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and other staff who have leadership responsibilities. I met with the members of the school's governing body and held a telephone conversation with the school's improvement partner consultant. I visited classrooms with you and we collected and scrutinised samples of pupils' work in books. I talked with individual pupils during visits to classrooms and observed them reading and checking their work. I listened to selected pupils reading and talked with them about their reading at home and school. I checked a range of documents relating to safeguarding with you and your administrative staff. We also examined details of pupils' attendance, pupils' progress and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. I took account of 87 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, 24 written comments from parents and one email from a parent. I also took account of 26 responses to the staff survey and 50 responses from pupils to their questionnaire.