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Mrs Pamela Telford
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Telford

Short inspection of Monkway Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 28 March 2017, 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your staff have created a welcoming, warm and bright school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about their learning. Parents are positive in their comments about teachers and your leadership, with every parent responding positively that the school is well led and managed. This view is endorsed wholeheartedly by your staff.

You, the governors and staff ensure that learning has a high profile across the school. Displays in corridors and classrooms celebrate pupils' work and high achievements, for example in the celebration of 'maths magicians' seen across the school. Pupils talk confidently about their learning and told me how they love 'learning fun things' and how well teachers help them to understand and guide them if they need help. Pupils are proud of their work and are keen to tell others what they have been learning. They are especially proud of their reading and are eager to discuss books they have recently read.

You, middle leaders and governors have taken action to address the areas of improvement identified at the last inspection. You have made significant improvements to the opportunities pupils have to use computers across the curriculum. You have invested in various technologies and programmes which enhance learning by supporting those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or which engage pupils by teaching topics such as coding. All pupils have access to information and communication technology (ICT) in their own

classrooms and are regularly taught in the computer room. Pupils learn a range of computer skills and these can be seen across the wider curriculum. Pupils in the nurture group are confident in their use of technology and have created personal, interesting displays in the nurture base.

You have trained staff so that they consistently ask questions that challenge and deepen pupils' thinking. Their questions are skilful and designed to make pupils think carefully about their responses. Pupils are frequently asked to 'explain', 'justify' or 'prove' their responses.

In response to the previous inspection team's requirement for you to raise the profile of mathematics across the school, leaders have developed a culture where success in mathematics is celebrated. Pupils celebrate mathematics work in the 'day to dazzle' assemblies and on noticeboards across the school and in classrooms which celebrate the mathematics work of pupils. A mathematics 'working wall' in each class highlights the good work done by a range of pupils. When I asked pupils to identify a piece of work they were particularly proud of, many of them directed me to work in their mathematics books, such as work on equivalent fractions and addition and subtraction of fractions with different denominators.

The previous inspection team also asked governors and leaders to ensure that the goals the school is aiming to achieve are precise in order to improve pupils' progress further. The school's self-evaluation and the improvement plans designed by you and your team are focused on pupil progress, with aspirational targets and clear milestones and criteria for success. Governors hold you to account over the progress you are making to achieve these targets. The local authority is also clear on the aims and actions leaders are taking to improve attainment and progress of all pupils.

During the inspection, we discussed the next steps for the school. You are now going to focus on ensuring stretch and challenge for your most-able pupils in all year groups. You are also going to further embed time in lessons for pupils to respond to the challenge questions set by teachers, in line with the school's policy. This will provide these pupils with opportunities to extend their thinking and develop their written reasoning skills. Secondly, you acknowledge that you need to develop strategies for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress across the wider curriculum. Governors will then be able to hold you rigorously to account for the progress of pupils across all year groups and across the curriculum.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training and that those responsible for safeguarding and recruitment have appropriate and recent qualifications. Governors also receive appropriate training. All safeguarding records, documentation and procedures are compliant and fit for purpose. Leaders know how to deal with children who are missing in education and are vigilant in all aspects of safeguarding.

Pupils feel safe in school and parents and staff agree. Pupils report that there are

rarely any incidents of bullying and that, if they do occur, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. You ensure that pupils are well taught about safety issues through your weekly life skills and personal education sessions. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online and how to make positive and healthy decisions. You work closely with a range of external agencies who contribute positively to the school's work in this area. Parents are also involved through 'coffee and chat' sessions where they can learn more about social media, staying safe online and how to support their children in keeping them safe and healthy.

Inspection findings

- You and your governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved further. You work well with external links, including the local authority and your local cluster of schools, to evaluate the work of the school and prioritise your next steps.
- Progress at the end of Year 6 was broadly average in writing. Progress in mathematics and reading was below average, particularly for the most able pupils. Leaders have taken immediate action to address these aspects to ensure that pupils achieve well.
- An analysis of 2016 reading results directed leaders to focus on language and inference. Leaders have changed reading sessions so that the level of challenge is consistently and appropriately high across all years and groups of pupils.
- Teachers provide challenging questions for pupils verbally, in written feedback to pupils and in their reading logs which go home to parents. Some parents are also asking questions and recording these in the reading logs.
- Individual reading has a high profile across the school. All staff have named pupils whom they listen to read at least twice a week and pupils are very keen to be heard reading. As a result of these interventions and strategies, the progress of current learners in reading presents a positive picture.
- New strategies to improve mathematics are evident throughout the school. There is now a consistent approach to the teaching of calculations and a consistent use of precise terminology in all classes. Leaders are also developing reasoning and mastery skills to provide pupils with the opportunity to understand topics in greater depth.
- Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning through sessions such as 'cake and calculations', where parents were involved in mathematics work in class with their child.
- The progress and attainment information provided by the school shows that the majority of pupils are making progress in line with teachers' expectations in mathematics. Where pupils are not making good progress, teachers put in place clear interventions to support pupils in closing the gaps in their knowledge and skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in their learning. The special educational needs coordinator and her team know pupils very well and work closely with parents, pupils and external agencies to

make sure they receive the support they need to achieve well.

- Pupils in the nurture group are taught life skills and take part in a range of activities to boost their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils were excited to tell the inspector about their recent 'Bake-off' competition and were proud of what they had accomplished in this task. Pupils here are well cared for, well taught and supported as they begin their key stage 2 studies.
- Behaviour across the school, in and outside lessons, continues to be good. Pupils are well mannered and polite. Their positive attitudes to learning make a good contribution to progress in the classroom. Pupils show a pride in their work and look smart in their new school physical education (PE) kit.
- The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving and the numbers of those pupils who are persistently absent are falling. Leaders are proactive in following up any absences and work hard with parents to remind them that holidays taken in school time will have a detrimental effect on their child's progress.
- Across the school, staff work together and are committed to providing the best possible education for pupils. Leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and its pupils and are focused on ensuring that all pupils will meet their potential. Staff never give up on a child at Monkway Junior School.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to expect teachers to provide stretch and challenge for the most able pupils, so that these pupils make rapid and sustained progress across a wide range of subjects, including reading and mathematics
- they develop new assessment and tracking systems, so that middle leaders, senior leaders and governors know how well pupils are progressing across the wider curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen O'Neill
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your lead teachers for reading and mathematics and the special educational needs coordinator. In addition, I met with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke by telephone to a representative from the local authority. I met formally with a group of pupils from across the school and talked informally with others around the school and in lessons.

You accompanied me on visits to classes where we observed teaching and learning, spoke with pupils and looked at the work in some pupils' books. I examined a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and attendance, and the school's assessment data on pupils' progress and attainment. I also scrutinised a range of policies and the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation report.

I also undertook a review of the school's website, which complies with government regulations. As part of the inspection, I considered 15 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 13 responses to Ofsted's Parent View, as well as comments received via the free-text facility. I also considered 49 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.