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Ms Jacqui Wilson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Wilson

### **Short inspection of Flimby Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 17 January 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 July 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 have established a culture across the school which promotes pupils' academic achievement while meeting the personal needs of pupils and their families.

You and the senior leadership team have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement because of your thorough monitoring and perceptive self-evaluation. You have correctly turned your attention to enhancing the opportunities pupils have to develop their progress in reading. Additionally, leaders have introduced strategies to improve pupils' mastery in mathematics. You and your staff go to great lengths to demonstrate to parents and carers how good attendance relates to good progress in children's learning.

Governors visit the school frequently. As a result, they have a detailed knowledge of standards, including the progress that pupils make in their learning. Governors use their professional skills and detailed knowledge to hold leaders to account. They provide a good balance of challenge and support for leaders and staff.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Staff provide an interesting and enticing environment in which to learn. Those pupils who spoke with me during the inspection told me they felt safe and learn how to stay safe beyond the school environment. They found difficulty in recollecting any recent incidents of bullying and were confident that adults would deal with them appropriately should any incidents occur.

The vast majority of parents share their children's positive view of the school. Parents commented that their children are 'well looked after, nurtured and encouraged to achieve'. One parent told me that 'the school is at the heart of our little village' and others told me how much they appreciate staff giving freely of their own time to support pupils contributing to community events.

Leaders have taken appropriate actions to address the areas for development identified at the last inspection. These included enhancing the quality of teaching and improving pupils' opportunities to develop their writing skills.

Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants to share best practice both within the school and through a consortium of schools. Staff training is tailored to meet both the needs of individual teachers and the school's priorities. As a result, leaders have ensured that over time, teaching is of a good quality.

Teachers promote a range of opportunities for writing across a range of subjects and topics. Displays and work in pupils' books show that they develop their writing skills systematically and across a range of genres. As a result, the progress pupils make in writing across the key stages is good.

Additionally, you and the governors have invested in a range of technologies to broaden the range of contexts in which pupils can learn. Teachers plan learning to enable pupils to develop their skills in research and this is helping to prepare pupils for the next stage in their education.

Outcomes for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2017 were untypically low. You have rightly identified unavoidable turbulence in staffing combined with a small cohort of pupils, of which almost a quarter joined the school during key stage 2, as contributing factors to disappointing results. Current pupils across all year groups are making progress which is similar to the good progress made by the 2016 Year 6 cohort. In this cohort, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was larger than that seen nationally.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

In your role as the designated safeguarding leader, together with your deputy designated safeguarding leader, you work relentlessly to ensure that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. You make sure that staff fully understand their duty and follow systems and procedures for raising concerns. You and your business manager ensure that all necessary checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are in place.

You make sure that the promotion of safeguarding throughout the school has a high profile. You provide staff with training that is up to date so that they and members of the governing body understand the current guidance. You and the deputy designated safeguarding leader are prompt in making referrals to the local

authority. Together, you rigorously follow up all concerns and make sure that pupils are kept safe. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

## **Inspection findings**

- My first line of enquiry related to the progress pupils make in reading across key stage 2. You showed me that leaders have raised awareness of the importance of reading across the school. Teachers quickly intervene to make sure that pupils falling behind in reading are brought back on track. You use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively to ensure that the support that pupils receive closely matches their needs. Current pupils in key stage 2 make good progress in reading, including middle-ability and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders introduced daily guided-reading sessions at the start of this academic year. This is proving effective as teachers and teaching assistants work with small groups of pupils and/or individuals, developing their understanding of what they have read. While some pupils are developing their independent reading skills staff work with others to tease out their predictions of what might happen next in their books and their reasons for thinking this. You rightly identify that there is still more to do to raise achievement for all pupils and fully engage all parents in encouraging reading at home.
- I also investigated the opportunities for developing English and mathematics skills across the curriculum. In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching greater depth by the end of key stage 2 was not as strong as that seen nationally. Leaders are now targeting more pupils to reach greater depth in their reading, writing and mathematics. We observed how effectively teachers plan the use of 'talk partners' as a tool to motivate pupils to talk extensively and build vocabulary before they embark on writing at length. Teachers used the recent visit to the theatre to see 'The Secret Garden' and a video clip to promote discussion and develop ideas before writing a diary. Progress in pupils' books shows that opportunities for writing in topic work are motivating girls and boys alike and quickening the progress of middle- and higher-ability pupils. Teachers plan science work to develop pupils' mathematical skills. During my meeting with pupils, they told me how much they enjoyed their trips and visits beyond their local environment.
- I looked at how the pupil premium funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils, particularly those of higher ability. In 2017, the proportion reaching higher standards was lower than that for other pupils. You use this fund to employ teaching assistants and teachers to deliver extra sessions. You and governors ensure that funding is well used for both academic support and support for the social and emotional well-being of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils, including those of higher ability, is now closer to that of other pupils nationally. Examples of pupil premium spending include subsidising the costs of school trips and curriculum enhancements. These experiences broaden pupils' experiences, take them beyond their local community and bring learning to life.
- I explored the high rates of absence in 2016 of disadvantaged pupils and those

who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You provided me with evidence to demonstrate how well you and members of the governing body have continued to take action to improve attendance. You follow up in detail those pupils who are late, occasionally absent or persistently absent. You have solid evidence of success. However, the small but significant proportion of pupils whose parents repeatedly take their children on holiday in term time adversely affects attendance and interrupts pupils' learning. The vast majority of pupils attend regularly and this supports progress in their learning.

- Finally, I explored the support that you provide for potentially vulnerable pupils. Staff take the initiative in raising any concerns they may have and this leads to swift support which is highly personalised for individual pupils. You work tirelessly with a raft of external agencies to ensure that pupils are provided with the support that they need. You and your staff give exceptional care and support to pupils and their families.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- strategies to develop pupils' love of reading both in the school and at home are embedded
- they continue to work with the minority of parents whose children have too many absences.

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

Naomi Taylor  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I observed teaching and learning alongside the headteacher. I held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders, members of the governing body and the designated safeguarding leader. I analysed 48 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and I spoke informally with parents at the school gates to seek their views. I also took account of 48 free-text responses from parents. I held a meeting with pupils and also spoke informally with pupils during breaks and in lessons. I reviewed the 15 responses to the Ofsted pupils' survey and the 13 responses to the Ofsted staff survey. During the inspection, I reviewed a range of school documents. These included: the school's development plans and self-evaluation documents; minutes of the governing body meetings; safeguarding documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.