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Mrs Louise Atkin  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Atkin

### **Short inspection of Dallam Community Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 1 November 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 May 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in Dallam Primary School since the last inspection. You and the deputy headteacher's exemplary leadership have brought about considerable improvements to the progress that pupils make in reading, writing and particularly in mathematics. As a result, Dallam Primary is a school where pupils thrive. Your comprehensive and thorough monitoring ensure that you have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas that now require further enhancement. You have correctly turned your attention to enhancing the curriculum in subjects other than reading and mathematics, while also continuing to strive for greater excellence in writing.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school because it offers a vibrant and enticing place in which to learn and develops well pupils' and the community's aspirations. Those pupils who spoke with me during the inspection said that they felt safe and that teachers and other adults are helpful. Older pupils relish the challenge they receive in mathematics lessons. A typical response illustrating this was that the work was hard but enjoyable.

Parents share pupils' high regard for the school. All parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, supported the school and recognised the positive impact that teachers have on their children's progress. This was particularly the case for parents who have children attending the resourced provision. They welcome the school's inclusivity and effective focus on learning for all.

Senior leaders demonstrate a high capacity to continue to improve and have taken effective actions to address the areas for development identified at the last inspection. These included enhancing the quality of teaching and improving pupils' attainment in writing.

The work seen in pupils' books and your detailed tracking of school-based assessments confirm that your actions have successfully brought about considerable improvement in the standards attained by pupils in writing, reading and mathematics. This improvement was recently confirmed in the provisional outcomes of the 2017 end of key stage 1 and 2 assessments.

Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved. The well-considered appointments of new staff, including the leader of the early years provision, have resulted in pupils receiving high-quality teaching. Appropriate amendments to policies and procedures mean that pupils now receive high-quality guidance about how they can improve their work, particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants are better trained and are more knowledgeable about the strategies they can use. This helps pupils master their subject, particularly in mathematics, reading and writing. Leaders have appropriately amended schemes of work to develop a 'Dallam curriculum' that is carefully tailored to meet the different needs of your pupils. Senior leaders, and more recently subject leaders, frequently check the impact of actions on pupils' learning. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve as well as other pupils nationally because of the high-quality teaching that they receive.

Leaders of subjects, other than reading, writing and mathematics, share your commitment to providing the best education they can. They are well into their journey to provide excellence in their subjects and have recently implemented some considerable refinements to enhance how the curriculum promotes learning in greater depth. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of these actions on pupils' progress and attainment, particularly in developing pupils' skills and knowledge in greater depth.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are of high quality and fit for purpose. Knowledgeable staff meticulously implement the school's policies relating to safeguarding. Statutory checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with children. Leaders have taken effective actions to ensure that the school is a safe and secure place in which children can learn.

Staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding, including that relating to online safety. Staff are vigilant about the potential risks that pupils may face. Records are appropriate and meticulously kept. Leaders share information with parents and the appropriate authorities effectively to ensure pupils' safety. Governors have ensured the appropriate monitoring and filtering arrangements are in place for the school's internet connection.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school because of their frequent and detailed monitoring and self-evaluation.

Sharply focused evaluation of termly assessments ensures that you have a detailed understanding of pupils' attainment and progress from their starting points. Leaders regularly visit classrooms, scrutinise pupils' work and seek the views of pupils to evaluate effectively the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. You use these findings to help staff to improve their practice through sharply focused discussions about pupils' progress. You hold teachers closely to account for the impact of their actions.

- Subject leaders plan and implement appropriate developments, including refinements to the tracking and evaluation of the progress made by different groups of pupils, in their subjects. Recently, subject leaders have been instrumental in implementing changes to the curriculum schemes of work for subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics. This promotes pupils' knowledge and understanding to a greater depth.
- Governors hold you closely to account for the impact of your actions. They make good use of their professional skills, including their experience of educational leadership, to ask challenging and probing questions. Governors recognised that the information provided on the school's website about the content of the curriculum did not reflect the detail held in school. They took immediate and effective action to rectify this. Consequently, the school's website meets the requirements about the information it provides.
- The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. In some subjects such as history and science, work in books shows that occasionally pupils, particularly the most able, sometimes need greater levels of challenge. Teachers and other adults effectively use carefully constructed questioning to encourage pupils to deepen their understanding by explaining the reasons for their answers. Teachers do not waste a moment of time available to promote learning.
- Teaching in the school's resourced provision for pupils who have particular special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. Teachers carefully design learning activities to meet the individual needs of pupils, while also ensuring that pupils follow the national curriculum at the appropriate levels of difficulty. Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, who attend your resourced provision, are fully included in school life and learning. Consequently, many of these pupils make considerable progress in developing their knowledge and social skills to be able to re-join mainstream classes for the whole or part of each day.
- Most children enter the school with levels of development below those typical for their age, especially in their communication skills and language development. Although the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of the early years is below the national average, the progress they make from their low starting points is good. The opening of the school's provision for two-year-olds contributes to this progress as children receive greater input from skilled professionals. In key stages 1 and 2, pupils make strong progress from their starting points in reading and mathematics because of high-quality teaching. Provisional progress outcomes in the 2017 national assessments in reading and mathematics were strong and in mathematics were in the top 5% in the country. You are taking the right actions to promote excellence in the outcomes in other subjects across the curriculum.
- Historically, attendance has been an issue for the school, particularly the proportion of those pupils who are persistently absent. However, this has now changed and there is a more positive picture. The most recent attendance figures for this term and those for

2016/17 show considerable improvement, including in the substantial reduction of persistent absenteeism. Your detailed records show that the vast majority of absences are for good reasons and are often linked to medical needs or genuine illness. Your well-respected attendance officer tenaciously challenges absences and lateness, and offers appropriate and effective support and guidance to bring about improvement.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- refinements being implemented to the school's curriculum ensure that pupils enhance their understanding and knowledge at greater depth in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

John Nixon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the deputy headteacher and some subject leaders in the school. I held a meeting with governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, and with the local authority adviser who works with your school. I spoke with pupils during lessons and around the school. I took account of the information contained within the responses to the online questionnaires for parents, Parent View, and those for staff. There were no responses to the pupils' online questionnaire. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day.

I visited classrooms with you to observe pupils' learning, looked at their work in books and their records of achievement. I reviewed information about pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation documentation, action plans and other policies. I looked at safeguarding, including evaluating the impact of the school's procedures and policies to keep children safe, including while they are online. I also scrutinised your recruitment checks and record-keeping.