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Mrs Amanda Pybus-Coates  
Headteacher  
Chilton Primary School  
Chilton  
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County Durham  
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Dear Mrs Pybus-Coates

### **Short inspection of Chilton Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 January 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 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, other leaders and governors have high expectations of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and are ensuring continued improvement within the school. You and the teachers now use pupils' performance information effectively to address any areas of underachievement. This was an area for improvement from the last inspection. Pupils receive the support they need promptly to improve and, as a result, they achieve well. Attainment has risen to above the national average by the end of Key Stage 2 in mathematics, reading and writing, including grammar, punctuation and spelling. This shows good progress from pupils' starting points.

Leaders make very thorough and regular checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Staff are provided with targets to improve the quality of their teaching and these are closely linked to arrangements for salary review. Teachers are provided with opportunities to learn from each other as well as bespoke training. Consequently, any weaknesses in teaching are addressed promptly and effectively. You have addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection well. For example, revisions to the curriculum have ensured more opportunities for pupils to engage in open-ended and investigative activities, especially in mathematics. As a result, rates of progress in mathematics are accelerating.

Pupils are very proud of their school and show respect and consideration for one another. They know they are valued, as shown by one pupil who stated, 'My

opinions are listened to in this school'. Pupils contribute towards improvements. For example, they are proud of the new school uniform they chose. They take their roles as members of the junior governing body, e-safety team, fair trade and eco teams very seriously. Involvement in a local 'Community Cohesion Task Force' allows pupils to make a strong contribution to their local community. Pupils are developing a good understanding of different faiths and cultures and show empathy towards others, including those affected by the recent floods and the plight of refugees. Pupils are now better prepared for life in modern Britain than at the time of the last inspection.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your governors give the highest priority to ensuring that pupils are safe. There are thorough and robust procedures for safety in place which are followed carefully and reviewed regularly. Records are detailed and of high quality. Systems are fit for purpose and pupils' safety is assured. You have addressed promptly the very few recommendations from the recent local authority review of safeguarding. For example, behaviour and bullying logs have improved and leaders analyse this information thoroughly and tackle any concerns. Training for all staff, including the designated officers and governors, is up to date. Leaders and staff are very vigilant in following up on any absences. As a result, attendance is at least in line with the national average and, for most groups of pupils, above average.

Pupils who spoke with me during the inspection said they feel safe and take responsibility for the safety of themselves and others. For example, pupils have undertaken first aid training and are proud of their roles as peer mediators and playground buddies where they take opportunities to help and support other pupils. They say they are taught how to protect themselves from dangers such as the risks they face when they are using online technology.

### **Inspection findings**

- You, other leaders and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas to be developed. This is because you regularly check on outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. You constantly strive to ensure that the school improves. The accurate analysis of school performance information is used to successfully address any areas of underachievement. The school improvement plan identifies the right priorities to help improve the school further. The quality of teaching is improving and pupils say they get the help they need if they are 'stuck' in their learning.
- Pupils say they are thoroughly enjoying their work in the new curriculum. They were able to explain how their identified topic is woven through all aspects of their work and how they evaluate what they know and what they would like to learn. They enjoy topics such as 'Explorers', 'Footprints in the Snow', Ancient Egyptians and Anglo-Saxons. This, combined with the interesting homework options, has really enthused pupils in their learning and, as a result, they are making more progress.

- The curriculum is exciting and stimulating and is greatly enriched by a range of educational visits and extra-curricular activities. Pupils benefit greatly from these activities, particularly in music and sport. A link with a local sports partnership is ensuring that the additional funding for sport is promoting positive attitudes to exercise and healthy living. However, there are not always sufficient opportunities across the school for pupils to engage in the more practical and investigative aspects of science. There are also too few opportunities for them to develop their higher-level analytical skills so they can think more deeply about the texts they are reading.
- Pupils say that behaviour is typically good over time and that if any pupil experiences difficulty they can go to the 'keep out of trouble club'. They are adamant that there is no bullying and if there were, they are sure that staff and leaders would deal with it promptly. Pupils indicated that they believe that you should 'treat everyone how you would like to be treated'. The number of exclusions has reduced over time and there have been none this year.
- There have been improvements within the early years. In 2015, a higher than average proportion of children reached the expected level of development, which is a substantial increase from the previous year. There is a stimulating environment with a range of effective learning opportunities. Adults use effective questioning and promote children's speaking and listening skills and their thinking skills well. Adults take every opportunity to move children on in their learning. There is a strong focus on developing children's early literacy and numeracy skills. Good-quality activities are provided to develop children's gross and fine motor skills and they are taught a correct pencil grip from a young age. There are good opportunities for children to engage in mark-making and mathematical activities. In the teaching observed, children were enjoying a range of activities on the theme of 'Space', including reading books about space, counting astronauts and making models of rockets. They persevered and concentrated well, for example when making models with play-dough.
- You and the other leaders have ensured continued improvement in outcomes for pupils. The results of the phonics check (letters and the sounds they represent) have been consistently above average and show a rising trend over time. There was also a rise in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2, and a notable rise in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Although nationally published data indicated a slight decline at the end of Key Stage 1, this has been reversed and pupils in Key Stage 1 are making consistently good progress. Disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar good progress to their peers.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- science teaching improves so there is a greater focus on developing pupils' skills in investigating and exploring
- the teaching of reading improves to enable pupils to develop better analytical skills so they can think about texts more deeply.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Durham County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christine Inkster  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and other leaders. I also met five members of the governing body, a group of pupils, four members of the parent association and a representative of the local authority. We discussed your current school self-evaluation and your improvement plan. I visited classrooms to observe teaching, to talk to pupils and look at their work. You and the deputy headteacher joined me for a lesson observation and we discussed the quality of teaching in the school. I evaluated a range of documents, including your records of the monitoring of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings and information on safeguarding, attendance and exclusions. There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to be taken into account, but I considered the views expressed in the school's own survey. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire but I took into account the responses to the staff questionnaires.