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**Head Teacher: Mrs Dawn Dunn B.Eng. Hons PGCE NPQH • Chair of Governors: Mrs L. Jamieson**

8 June 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

Our school was inspected by Ofsted after Easter and the report has been published. The inspection lasted for two days and focused on provision across the school. We aim to always improve our practice and work with different partners to do so; advice from an inspection is no different.

We are pleased that inspectors recognised that relationships between adults and children are strong and that we know our families well.

We are equally pleased that the work we have done to develop our curriculum offer since the last inspection was praised as having a positive impact on our children. The team noted that teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects, and that all children, including those with additional needs, are well supported to learn. Inspectors investigated our Maths and Computing curriculums to make their judgements, while also looking at work in Geography and Science.

Inspectors did not like our Early Years provision, and we must work to change that. The quality of our Early Years curriculum and provision must be improved so that it matches the standard of learning across the rest of the school. To do this, we will be working with Hazel Dene childcare, to ensure the provision in school matches and extends what happens for the youngest learners there, and we will use support from the Local Authority and other schools' Early Years leaders to ensure that we put in place the elements of best practice we find. Some of this work, including a Local Authority visit, has already begun.

The report does, however, highlight our phonics and teaching of early reading, and inspectors were impressed when children, at an early stage of reading, could read unfamiliar texts. They also acknowledged the work we have done to improve children's enjoyment of reading and the exposure children have to a wide range of texts. The children who were chosen by inspectors did a fantastic job and were proud to show off their skills.

In addition, inspectors praised the children's understanding of PSHE and Relationships, and the curriculum we have in place for this. Children across the school were clear in how to stay safe, what makes a healthy relationship and spoke positively about discrimination and supporting others. They knew how and who they would speak to if they were worried and showed a good understanding of bullying, although acknowledged this was rare, but dealt with seriously.

Children told inspectors that they were disappointed that our pupil voice groups weren't in place and that there wasn't much choice in after-school clubs. This is something that we recognise we need to reinstate consistently so that our children continue to have a voice and make an impact in our school and their community.

Although not referenced in the report, inspectors told us that the children spoke well, and showed great manners at all times; most children in school took part in discussions either in classes, or in small groups.

The report states that safeguarding is effective. Inspectors felt there was a culture of safeguarding, and children told them that they felt safe in school. In terms of behaviour, inspectors told governors that, although they had not witnessed any poor behaviour, the children say they behave differently for different adults. From this, they felt our expectations of how behaviour is taught and dealt with must not be clear enough, and that the children are unsure of how rights, charters and rules all fit together. Again, work to streamline this and make sure everyone understands the strategies we use, has already begun and we will keep you informed about this.

Some systems, including a change in the way we do deal with behaviour, have only recently been introduced so we are encouraged that inspectors rightly recognised that these still need to be embedded and recorded to ensure we accurately analyse our impact and measure our next steps.

The report is relatively brief and much of the positive feedback we received is not recorded. There are recommendations for us, as with all inspections, but we are confident that our school will continue to be a good school and we are pleased to be fully supported by our Governors and the Local Authority in the decisions and actions we take.

The full report can be found on our website at: <https://www.hesleden.durham.sch.uk/about-us/school-performance/> or by using the QR code below:



We look forward to continuing to work with you on our journey, and hope to see you throughout this summer half-term.

Regards,

Dawn Dunn  
Head Teacher

Laura Jamieson  
Chair of Governors