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Mrs Clare Holloway
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Holloway

Short inspection of Crofton Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 13 November 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Since you became headteacher in September 2017, you have led the school with very clear determination. There have been substantial staffing changes since that time, but you have developed the skills of the current staff team well and given leaders the opportunity to grow and extend their knowledge. You have an accurate understanding of the school's many strengths and where further improvements are needed. Your action plans set out clearly the steps you and your staff are taking to continue to improve standards.

Since starting at the school, you have taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching. You have developed teachers' skills in ensuring that their teaching offers sufficient challenge to the pupils. Senior leaders ensure the sharing of good practice, thereby securing improvements in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. As a result, pupils' outcomes at the end of Year 2 were above, or in line with, national averages in reading, writing and mathematics last year. However, you and your school leaders recognise that further work is needed to ensure that children in early years reach levels of skill and understanding that are in line with or above the national average. Also, while pupils achieve well in most areas of the curriculum, work is still needed to develop the wider curriculum overall, in terms of subjects other than English and mathematics, so that it offers challenge and opportunities for progression in all subjects.

You are ambitious for the pupils and staff and want them all to succeed. Staff work closely as a team and support one another. Staff say that they feel valued and enjoy working at the school. You challenge, support and coach the staff, who value the training opportunities provided. The pupils are well behaved and keen to talk about what they enjoy about school. For example, one pupil told me, 'We learn lots of things and we make new friends.' The pupils told me enthusiastically how they had been learning about The Great Fire of London and had a special visitor who explained what it was like to live through the fire and how London was rebuilt afterwards.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive and hold you and your staff in high regard. They know that their children make progress and are well cared for. Parents' comments included 'A lovely school of which I am proud and pleased my child can attend.'

Parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) particularly value the support they receive. The effect you are having on the school is recognised. Several parents stated that the school is much better than it was because of your high expectations.

The areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report have been tackled effectively. Since the previous inspection, you and your leadership team have worked hard to ensure that teaching is good or better and that it challenges pupils in lessons to achieve their best. Regular checks are made on the quality of teaching and learning and the quality of work in pupils' books. In the lessons that we visited together, we saw work that teachers had matched closely to the ability of the pupils. There has also been a focus on the development of writing since the last inspection. Writing has a high prominence throughout the school, in books and on displays. A whole-school approach to the teaching of the core writing skills has been implemented and has ensured that pupils are more confident and fluent in the work they produce. Pupils' writing is linked to all areas of the curriculum and the older pupils write at length about the history and geography topics they cover.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The single central record of pre-employment checks on the suitability of adults to work with children is compliant, and the school's recruitment procedures are secure. Record keeping is thorough and any concerns are dealt with diligently. Staff training is up to date and records are frequently checked. Staff receive regular training to ensure that they are knowledgeable about how to keep pupils safe. Leaders provide weekly updates and reminders about safeguarding to keep levels of vigilance high.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in different situations, for example when using the internet, riding a bike and when a fire alarm sounds. Leaders implement effectively a variety of strategies to keep pupils safe. For example, older pupils have learnt about the 'PANTS' rule in assemblies, which teaches them about staying safe

from sexual abuse, and this is now being taught to the children in early years as well.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused on four key lines of enquiry. The first of these was in relation to Year 2 pupils attaining the expected standard in phonics. You are carefully monitoring this group of pupils and checking whether they are on track to achieve the required standard this year. A new phonics intervention has been implemented and is delivered by an experienced teacher. The teacher also ensures that pupils consistently use their phonics knowledge at the appropriate level in all lessons to reinforce their skills. Current assessment information shows that more Year 2 pupils are on track to attain the expected standard in phonics this year.
- During the inspection, we looked at the quality of teaching in early years. Last year, the percentage of children that attained a good level of development was below the national average and not enough children exceeded the early learning goals at the end of Reception. You have quite rightly identified that this is an area of improvement for the school.
- Analysis of assessments showed the school that children's writing skills are stopping many Reception children from attaining the good level of development. Consequently, there has been a strong push on developing writing skills in both Nursery and Reception. The whole indoor early years area has been improved over the last year. The children can now access high-quality resources to enable them to practise and apply their skills in all areas of learning and development.
- Staff have been given training and guidance on how to effectively plan for, and make assessments on the Nursery and Reception children and these have resulted in stronger progress for more children. There are opportunities for children to write independently in a range of areas and staff in the rest of the school are to implement these sentence-writing strategies. The early years outdoor area needs development, so that children can experience the same high level of learning opportunities outdoors that they have indoors.
- The third area of enquiry was to evaluate the breadth of subjects in the curriculum. The website currently provides limited information about this. However, in school, there were many examples of how pupils study and enjoy a range of interesting subjects and topics. For example, pupils said that they enjoy learning about Guy Fawkes, Remembrance Day and nocturnal animals.
- Pupils' workbooks showed examples of how well the curriculum fosters their learning across subjects. Mathematics is used in scientific experiments and children write at length about the current topic they are being taught. Science in particular has been developed well, with a specialist teacher joining the school, and a forest school area being used on a weekly basis to enable children to learn about the natural world. However, currently not all subjects are taught in a purposeful, cohesive way, to deepen pupils' learning.
- The final area that I looked at during the inspection related to attendance. Historically, pupils' attendance has been below national figures and persistent

absence has been high. Attendance is monitored closely and pupils' absences are swiftly followed up. Leaders work hard to improve attendance and have introduced a range of strategies to reward good attendance and address poor attendance. The education welfare officer and the parent support adviser offer appropriate support and challenge to families. Current attendance and persistent absence data shows an improvement this year when compared with the same time last year. However, persistent absence is still above the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvements are made to the early years outdoor area, so that it is a rich and exciting learning environment, offering many opportunities for children to explore and extend their learning
- recent development work to enable pupils to deepen their learning across the curriculum, in subjects other than English and mathematics, is further extended and embedded
- pupils' attendance continues to improve and levels of persistent absence fall.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wakefield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hussey
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher and members of the staff team. I also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body and representatives from the multi-academy trust, including those that offer school improvement support. Together, we visited a range of classes, observing pupils, talking with them and looking at their work. I also scrutinised a sample of pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics, with you and the deputy headteacher.

I looked at all the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires, including the views of 46 parents. I also spoke to parents at the start of the school day. I listened to pupils read and met with a group of pupils to ask them about their experience of school.

I evaluated documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records and information about safeguarding.