

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs Anna Cvijetic
Headteacher
Crowle Primary Academy
Manor Road
Crowle
Lincolnshire
DN17 4ET

Dear Mrs Cvijetic

Short inspection of Crowle Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 14 June 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in December 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your high expectations and unswerving determination that every pupil should achieve the best they can are echoed by all the staff. Pupils are also keen to do their best. Teamwork is at the heart of the school's success. Leaders and teachers are thoughtful and reflective. They challenge each other regularly and are constantly on the look-out for ways of improving teaching. Senior and middle leaders have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and they make regular and robust checks on the quality of teaching and the quality of pupils' work. As a result, teaching is consistently good and increasingly consistent in meeting the needs of all groups of pupils.

You have the respect of the whole school, including parents and carers, because of your deep and sophisticated understanding of the community and pupils' needs. Your work to raise the aspirations of pupils and their families is strong. The less able and disadvantaged pupils have particularly benefited from your strong moral purpose, so that they make the progress expected of them, and many exceed this. Your work as a local leader of education has helped to keep the work of the school fresh, and consequently, leaders are confident in looking for innovative ways of improving pupils' progress. For example, teachers have researched how best to engage and sustain boys' interest in their work and implemented their findings to make pupils' work more 'boy friendly'.

The senior team's evaluations of the school are candid and unflinching, which helps you to have a clear view of the school's strengths and the areas needing further work. As a result of your team's work, the number of children gaining a good level of development at the end of the early years is above the national average and this is on track to improve even further. You also know, for example, that the most able pupils were not making the same rapid progress as other groups of pupils. As a result of swift action by you, and senior and middle leaders, teachers are now becoming more adept at creating a better level of challenge for the most able pupils; consequently, their progress is improving.

Inspectors identified that the school should improve pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. You and your senior team have tackled this successfully. As a result, rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics are above the national averages at key stage 2. Pupils now thoroughly enjoy writing. They were very keen to show me their favourite pieces and explain how their work has improved.

You have recognised rightly that you cannot achieve continuing success alone and you have developed a strong middle and senior leadership team. This has helped the school to make a start on ensuring that pupils' progress in foundation subjects such as science and history matches that in English and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are well ordered, detailed and of a good quality. Pupils say that they feel safe because they trust adults to take action when they are in need of support. Even more importantly, they are confident that they can talk to adults about tricky problems and explore their ideas in a safe environment.

You and your team know your pupils and their families very well. You are alert to any signs and circumstances that can make pupils vulnerable. When support is needed from other professionals and services, your team acts quickly to secure additional help. The team is particularly skilful in maintaining strong relationships with families when they are going through difficult times. Governors make sure that policies are reviewed regularly so that any lessons learned are acted upon swiftly.

The rates of absence for all groups of pupils have reduced. You are acutely aware that disadvantaged pupils tend to be absent more often than other groups and you and your team have been successful in tackling this. Pupils and their families understand the value of regular attendance, and the number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced markedly.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They can give examples of risky behaviour and how to manage risks, including those associated with the internet, and when to seek adult help.

Pupils behave well and respect each other and adults. You are aware that a small minority of pupils sometimes indulge in name-calling, generally about the appearance of other pupils. The warm and trusting atmosphere in the school means that pupils feel able to seek help when this occurs and to be sure that it will be dealt with firmly. Senior leaders are providing pupils with opportunities to learn about values of respect, tolerance and open acceptance and know that there is further work to do in embedding this through all subjects.

Inspection findings

Leaders, including governors, have raised the aspirations of pupils and their families successfully. This is reflected in teachers' high expectations of what pupils can do and their accurate assessments of pupils' work. Pupils also have high expectations of themselves; they take pride in their work and their appearance.

Leaders' thirst for improvement has resulted in a strong, purposeful atmosphere in which nothing is taken for granted. They have taken advantage of the changes to the national curriculum to make sure that pupils' work engages and motivates different groups of pupils. Pupils enjoy a broad range of subjects and the most able pupils are now challenged more effectively. In addition, boys are increasingly better able to maintain their attention and say that they enjoy their work. Leaders' rigorous evaluations have identified that there is more work to do in making sure that the teaching in foundation subjects consistently matches the high quality achieved in mathematics and English.

Children get off to a positive start in the early years. The number of children achieving a good level of development has improved every year and this is preparing them well for their work in key stage 1. The number of pupils achieving the expected levels in phonics (the sounds that letters represent) is also above the national average and on track to improve further this year. This is helping pupils to lay down firm foundations for gaining good-quality reading and writing skills as they move through the school. Leaders have identified that pupils' spelling, punctuation and use of grammar are not as strong as other aspects of their writing skills. Leaders have implemented new teaching approaches and, as a result, pupils' spelling, punctuation and use of grammar are beginning to improve.

Senior and subject leaders have a keen sense of accountability. They have dedicated leadership time which they use effectively to check on the quality of pupils' work and the quality of teaching, including the accuracy of teachers' assessments. New teachers and leaders are supported well through high-quality coaching, mentoring and training.

The governing body has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas it needs to improve. They do not hesitate to challenge where necessary by asking pertinent questions. They are regular visitors to the school and they are particularly robust in planning for changes to staffing. Governors agree that crisper

performance 'milestones' in the school's improvement plan would help them to monitor leaders' work even more robustly.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly throughout the school. However, occasionally, pupils' sense of respect for diversity is not as strong as it could be and this results in a small amount of name-calling and occasional cheekiness to midday supervisors and teaching assistants who are covering for teachers' absence.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the most able pupils and boys are consistently challenged, so that they reach their potential and exceed what is expected for their age
- the teaching of foundation subjects and the teaching of spelling, punctuation and the use of grammar match the high standards established in English and mathematics
- pupils' respect for difference and diversity is promoted strongly throughout the curriculum
- the school improvement plans include interim 'milestones' which are clearly measurable, so that leaders, especially governors, can check whether actions are having sufficient impact.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt

Senior Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and other senior and middle leaders, pupils and two members of the governing body. I had a telephone conversation with a new governor. I also met with two teachers who are relatively new to the school. I visited lessons with you and looked at pupils' work. I looked at the results from Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) and considered 18 responses. I examined a range of documents, including information about safeguarding, and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.