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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Joanne Blacoe
Headteacher
Horsforth Newlaithes Primary School
Victoria Crescent
Horsforth
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS18 4PT

Dear Mrs Blacoe

Short inspection of Horsforth Newlaithes Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 February 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 January 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You lead the school by example, setting high standards for both staff and pupils. As a result, staff work hard, the learning community is harmonious and children are happy. The strong ethos of care and guidance is evident from all staff. Children are at the heart of all your work and you strive to ensure that they receive the best education possible.

Your new through primary school is now complete, with the addition of Reception and key stage 1, and you have created a strong staff team. You have carefully handled the many recent changes to staffing and your support for new teachers is a key strength of the school.

Children are happy. They love their school and enjoy the varied and enriched curriculum. You have created a warm and vibrant school where children are safe and well cared for. You work well with the local community and recently took ownership of the wraparound school care, which provides a well-used and valued resource for your many working parents. The majority of parents cannot speak highly enough of the work carried out by teachers. They particularly recognise the approach to learning in the early years because children are so happy and parents feel involved.

You and your deputy headteacher have an accurate view of the strengths and

weaknesses of the school and are working together to continue to drive forward improvements. The previous inspection report required you to ensure that standards in writing improved to the same high standards as seen in reading and mathematics. You were initially successful in achieving this but, after your disappointing 2016 results, both in key stage 1 and 2, it has once more become a focus for improvement. You have already implemented a wide variety of strategies to raise writing standards. A stronger focus on early handwriting and a whole-school approach to how you teach writing are already showing better outcomes.

You have worked alongside specialist moderators to improve your understanding of the new assessment procedures. This is now ensuring that your assessments in Years 2 and 6 are more accurate and you are collecting a wider range of evidence to back this up. Most pupils across the school are working at age-related expectations and you are tracking the progress of the most able more rigorously. You recognise the need to increase the proportion of the most able pupils reaching the higher standards by the end of key stages 1 and 2, given that a high proportion of children leave the early years exceeding the expected outcomes.

Governors are a key strength of the school. They give a high level of challenge and ensure that you respond to their questions. Governors value the training they receive and, as a result, bring new ideas and improvements which benefit the school. Governors are knowledgeable and recognise that your approach to learning in the early years is a key factor in setting the early foundations for children to become lifelong learners. They are realistic and challenge the leaders to ensure that the focus continues to bring about improved outcomes.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are suitable. Your record-keeping systems provide detailed key information. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding regularly checks the single central record. Recently introduced improvements have further strengthened your procedures.

Staff receive regular training on how to keep pupils safe. Your online recording system provides a clear timeline of when you have involved other agencies and details actions you have taken to speed up support. You work hard to ensure that all pupils are safe. Parents pre-book and sign pupils in and out of the before- and after-school club. Pupils are safe because leaders apply strict safety routines.

Inspection findings

- You and the deputy headteacher are a strong leadership team and work well together. The positive relationships you create with both staff and pupils set the standard across the school. As a result, a strong team ethos pervades your staff team, governors and pupils. You set high expectations for staff and, because your staff are motivated and feel valued, they strive to meet them.
- You are tracking the progress of pupils across the school. Current information

shows that most pupils are making at least good progress. However, leaders do not check carefully enough whether the information collected is accurate. Governors, for example, have rightly challenged the particularly high rates of progress in some classes, which is not consistent across the school. Your deputy headteacher has worked closely with staff in Year 2 and Year 6 to check standards. However, not all classes receive the same level of scrutiny.

- Passionate leadership of the early years and your approach to learning provide children with a valuable start to their education. Children demonstrate high levels of engagement in their learning and attitudes are positive. Parents are heavily involved in their children's education. Children leave early years broadly in line with national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. However, many do better than this. Standards are continuing to rise and children make good progress.
- Prior to 2016, key stage 1 outcomes in recent years have been well above average. Outcomes in 2016, however, fell and were below average. Leaders are now, rightly, focusing on making sure that this dip is reversed and that, by the end of Year 2, pupils are at least in line with national expectations. Similarly, they are also making sure that the pupils now in Year 3 catch up. Current assessment information for Year 3 shows that most pupils are now back on track to reach the expected standard by the end of the school year, with a much higher proportion of pupils on track to exceed the expected standard.
- A renewed school focus on writing is already having a positive impact. Teachers are more confident in how they assess where pupils are in their learning. New writing 'trackers' at the front of pupils' books enable teachers to assess what pupils can do and target their teaching to meet pupils' needs. Individual target cards ensure that pupils know how to improve their work. A much higher proportion of current pupils are now on track to meet and/or exceed expectations across the school as a result.
- Classroom learning environments mirror the strong focus on writing. Teachers display good examples of writing to motivate and encourage others. Displays of current grammar and spelling work provide a useful reference for pupils during their lessons. Pupils, including the most able, apply their grammar and punctuation skills well in their independent writing. Pupils achieved well above the national expectations in spelling and grammar in key stage 2 in 2016.
- The well-planned curriculum inspires pupils to want to learn. Poetry and artwork feature highly, with eye-catching displays throughout the communal areas showcasing what pupils can achieve and utilising links between subjects. Work on drug awareness, other cultures and British values prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have taken over the running of the before- and after-school club this year. Pupils receive a healthy start to the day with a range of different breakfast options. Staff provide a variety of different activities throughout the session. As a result, the club is well used and pupils enjoy coming.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the accuracy of assessment information is rigorously checked in all classes to support teachers with their ongoing assessments
- standards across key stage 1 improve quickly so that pupils are at least in line with national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2
- more of the most able pupils reach the highest standards across the school, particularly in writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Lunn
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Along with you and your deputy headteacher, I visited a number of classrooms to observe teaching and learning. I looked at pupils' current workbooks in writing and heard pupils read. I discussed aspects of your work with both you and the deputy headteacher. I held meetings with middle leaders, three newly qualified teachers and one recently qualified teacher. I met with four members of the governing body, including the chair, and the school improvement officer from the local authority. I took into account 117 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, along with 24 responses to the staff questionnaire and 91 pupil responses.