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26 September 2017

Mrs Helen Otley
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Otley

Short inspection of Keresforth Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 September 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your dedication and that of your staff and governors ensure that pupils at your school are well cared for and make good progress. Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes in the teaching and leadership teams due mainly to the retirement, and promotion to other schools, of long-standing members of staff. Your strong leadership has ensured that the strengths identified at the last inspection have been sustained despite several staffing changes. You and your previous team tackled areas of improvement raised at the last inspection well. Changes in staffing have allowed you and the governors to consider a restructuring of the leadership team, which you have recently completed. You are now supported by a deputy headteacher and three new middle leaders. All leaders have clear roles and lines of responsibility so that they can be rigorously held to account for the work they do. The work you do with an outstanding school, plus support for teachers and teaching assistants, have supported improvement in the quality of teaching. You and your team know the current areas for improvement, such as issues of low attendance, missed opportunities for learning in early years, and getting more pupils learning at a greater depth. You have already identified some actions to deal with these issues in your school improvement plan.

I spoke to a number of parents during the inspection and a great many took the

time to let me know their opinion through other means. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the work you do to ensure that their children are happy, safe and making good progress. Of those parents who responded to Parent View, 95% would recommend Keresforth Primary School to another parent. Parents commented that they consider Keresforth Primary School to be one of the most 'fantastic, well-led, wonderfully staffed schools in the area'.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team have made your school a very caring and safe place to be in. All pupils, parents and staff that responded to questions about pupils being safe and happy in school were resoundingly positive. You have one school rule, 'treat others as you would like them to treat you'. This rule and the ethos it promotes are recognised by all and help to make the school the welcoming and vibrant environment that it is. All pupils who commented said that they liked coming to school and that the strength of the school was that it was a caring and friendly environment.

As designated safeguarding leader, you ensure that all staff know what signs may indicate that a child is possibly vulnerable. Staff know what to do when they have concerns. Clear procedures are in place. Records are detailed and fit for purpose so that no minor detail is missed. You work closely with outside agencies, including the local authority, in the best interests of the child. Pupils comment that behaviour at breaktimes can be boisterous and there is some name-calling. However, they know that teachers deal with this type of behaviour swiftly and say that it does not make them feel any less safe. Pupils also say that they can speak to adults about any concerns they may have.

Inspection findings

- Children start the school in either the Nursery or Reception class with a range of pre-school experiences. Many children start with skills in language and communication that are below those typical of children of their age. This, and joining the school later than other children, often mean that children do not reach the standards in language and communication of which they are capable by the time they leave early years.
- Children very quickly settle into their new school. Staff promote good behaviour and children find their new environment exciting and engaging. Children start to learn quickly as teachers play alongside them, modelling language and extending the children's knowledge. For example, a teacher played in the water tray, teaching children scientific and mathematical concepts and vocabulary. Adults comment on how the children often prefer to play and learn outside. However, outside opportunities are missed to promote language and communication skills, both through planned activities and through adult interaction.
- You and your team plan a curriculum so that pupils are engaged and interested in learning and can make good progress. Teachers take great care to make the

classroom environment interesting, and you have ensured that they have the resources to do so. Pupils quickly learn because they want to know more. Pupils' vocabulary is significantly improved by the time they leave the school in Year 6. Pupils were eager to tell me what palaeontologists do and how this was different from an archaeologist. They keenly told me about the different types of dinosaurs, such as a pterodactyl, and how these dinosaurs are related to bats. Pupils like their teacher and are not afraid to ask questions to clarify a point of understanding. Some pupils are not learning at a greater depth, across a range of subjects, as too much of their learning time is spent completing work that is not challenging enough. You have started to take action to address this issue and, for example, teaching assistants now have weekly workshops to consider how pupils can learn at greater depth. However, more still needs to be done.

- Progress in reading has not always been as good as in writing, and particularly in mathematics. However, pupils are taught phonics well and this helps the progress they make as they clearly use their phonic knowledge to help them learn to read and write. Younger pupils use their phonic knowledge to decode words and older pupils read fluently and with good comprehension skills. Investment has been made in improving reading skills, for example, in purchasing new books so that pupils have access to more challenging texts.
- To try to improve rates of attendance, you have engaged the help of the local authority education welfare officer and have introduced other strategies, for example celebration assemblies and phone calls to parents. On occasions, this work has been successful in improving the attendance of some pupils. However, levels of attendance remain low.
- Governors, particularly the chair of the governing body, have a sound knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have worked well with you since the last inspection to ensure that the school has the capacity for continuous improvement. Your performance management to monitor the quality of teaching is rigorous. Staff comment on the good support they receive, for example through working with teachers at an outstanding school. Newly qualified teachers receive close support and monitoring. You ensure that teachers are set challenging targets to raise the quality of their performance. Governors told me that you give them a wealth of information, such as performance management and pupils' progress information, which they can assimilate and challenge so that they have an accurate picture of what needs to be done to make this an outstanding school. Governors ensure that you have the resources to work with other schools and external agencies when the need arises.
- The local authority makes regular assessments of school improvement based on pupils' progress information and the occasional visits it makes to the school. It has confidence in the capacity of the leadership and management of the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- children in early years make faster progress in their language and communication skills, particularly outside
- more strategies are introduced to improve attendance
- pupils who are capable of learning at a greater depth are given more opportunities to do so.

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

Yours sincerely

Jo Sharpe
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spent most of the day with you and your deputy headteacher. You accompanied me in lessons, where I spoke to pupils about their learning, and considered work in books and the quality of teaching. We had discussions and considered documentation about safeguarding, including the single central record of employability checks, the quality of teaching and pupils' performance. I also met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. I observed pupils' behaviour at different times of the school day, including dinnertime, when I also spoke to members of staff. I spoke to pupils informally and more formally, when they read to me and told me about the work in their books. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan. I also took account of 20 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 16 comments on the free-text facility for parents and a letter. I spoke to more than nine parents. A total of 23 members of staff responded to the staff questionnaire and 40 pupils to the pupil questionnaire.