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Mrs Jane Norton  
Headteacher  
Crossgates Primary School  
Kiln Lane  
Milnrow  
Rochdale  
Lancashire  
OL16 3HB

Dear Mrs Norton

### **Short inspection of Crossgates 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. You and your staff have created a welcoming and safe learning environment for your pupils and you know them well.

You have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement that inspectors identified during the previous inspection. You have enhanced the quality of teaching, especially in mathematics, by introducing lesson study. This is a process by which teachers share and acquire good practice by careful observation of the most effective teachers, both in your school and in other schools. You have also worked on developing teachers' questioning skills, and we saw effective examples of these during our joint visits to classes. Consequently, achievement in mathematics for the majority of pupils is typically strong. However, you accept that there is sometimes a lack of challenge for the most able pupils.

You have also improved the design of the outdoor area for children in the early years. This is now a place where they can develop their skills well, including writing, number and physical development. Children typically make good progress from their starting points and the design of the outdoor space has made a positive contribution to this progress.

I met with some pupils from key stage 2 during the inspection. They told me that they enjoy school and that it is a welcoming place. They appreciate the variety of

clubs that the school provides, such as cricket and steel band. They also enjoy educational visits, such as to mosques and synagogues as part of their religious education, and find these help them to understand other faiths well. All of these activities contribute effectively to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and promote a good understanding of fundamental British values.

Pupils also said that their teachers help them to make progress in their learning. They do this in different ways, such as, in the words of one pupil, giving 'constructive criticism'. Pupils also told me that they find the work they do 'quite challenging and quite fun'. They showed themselves to be well mannered and articulate.

You have quickly identified areas for improvement for the current academic year and have drawn up plans with appropriate actions. For example, you have introduced a new tracking and assessment system to provide greater detail in assessing subjects other than English and mathematics. However, you acknowledge that the criteria for success in your plan do not relate precisely to measurable achievement of pupils.

My discussion with members of staff revealed that they are very positive about the school. They talked of its family atmosphere and all-round warm relationships. They are clear about the school's priorities to secure further improvement. They appreciate the training that leaders provide and how it is linked to their performance management targets and to the school's development plan. They spoke confidently about the programmes that staff use to encourage pupils' broader development, such as philosophy for children and the educational visits that pupils enjoy.

The external adviser whom you have commissioned and the local authority adviser have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop. Though their involvement is appropriately 'light touch', they provide effective support.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Your reporting process is thorough and you effectively pursue matters with agencies, such as social services, when required. The school's single central record of checks on staff is compliant.

Staff and governors receive regular and thorough training in safeguarding. Staff have a secure knowledge of the different kinds of abuse that pupils could suffer and are alert to the signs. They make pupils aware of particular safeguarding issues that are prevalent in the local area, such as grooming, and provide opportunities to discuss issues concerning radicalisation. Pupils feel safe in school and understand the various forms of bullying. They say that it very rarely happens, but they are confident that teachers would manage it effectively if it did. All of these features amount to a strong culture of safeguarding in the school.

## Inspection findings

- I followed a number of lines of enquiry during the inspection, which we agreed at the start of the day. I have already written about some aspects of these earlier in this letter. They concerned how you have addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection report and how effective safeguarding is.
- One other line of enquiry was about how well children in Reception make progress in their reading. I listened to pupils reading from the current Year 1, who have only recently completed their Reception Year. They read with fluency appropriate to their age and stage of development and use phonics to help them to read unfamiliar words. Recent unconfirmed assessment information for 2017 indicates that there has been an improvement in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development and reaching the early learning goal for reading compared to 2016. These percentages are close to the national average, which represents good progress from children's starting points.
- The next line of enquiry concerned the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 in English and mathematics. By the end of Year 2 in 2017, there was a marked improvement in the achievement of this group. Although the number of disadvantaged pupils was small, the proportion who reached the expected standard in reading, in writing and in mathematics was close to the national average for non-disadvantaged pupils. Evidence from workbooks also indicates good progress. For example, pupils in Year 2, including those who are disadvantaged, develop their mathematical skills from practising simple number bonds to 20 to solving problems that use calculations involving hundreds, tens and ones.
- Another focus was about the dip in achievement in mathematics in the Year 6 tests in 2017. You were disappointed by pupils' performance in this subject and were quick to analyse the results. You discovered that three pupils were very close to the threshold to achieve the expected standard, so you have sent these papers away for re-marking. You also discovered that pupils did not perform as well in the reasoning questions as they did in other types of question. You have therefore included a strong focus on mathematical reasoning as a key objective in your school's development plan for this year. The current Year 6 pupils made good progress in Year 5 and you anticipate that they are on track to achieve well this year.
- Finally, governors know the school well and challenge school leaders strongly. Although they discharge their duties effectively, they are aware that there are a small number of amendments to make to the school's website. Leaders have said that they will attend to this promptly.

## Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they secure strong achievement in mathematics for pupils in Year 6 by improving their reasoning skills

- they make sure that the success criteria in their school's development plans are precise and clearly linked to pupils' achievement
- they provide more consistent challenge for most-able pupils in mathematics
- they make the necessary amendments to the school's website and regularly check that it remains compliant.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Quinn  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I carried out short visits to the early years and all year groups in key stage 1 and key stage 2, which were joint activities with you. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation summary, action plans for school improvement, records of incidents of bullying and misbehaviour, minutes of meetings of the governing body and records connected with the safeguarding of children. I held discussions with members of staff, governors and pupils. I had a discussion on the telephone with the external consultant you have commissioned and with a representative of the local authority. I heard pupils reading. I analysed pupils' work and the school's own assessment information. I evaluated 35 responses received through Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. I also analysed 20 responses to the staff questionnaire and 56 responses to the pupil questionnaire.