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Mr Mark Toogood
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Dear Mr Toogood

Short inspection of Crossways Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

In 2013, you were appointed as executive headteacher of Crossways Infant and Junior Schools, following the federation of the two schools. You have established a strong strategic lead for the federation. Likewise, senior staff and teams of staff work seamlessly together to ensure the continuation of the good education provided. Staff are already building on the findings of the inspection of the infant school last March to improve outcomes for the most able pupils and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make stronger progress in phonics (letters and the sounds they represent).

Close working internal partnerships are supported by effective external work with other schools as well as local and international experts. For example, the accuracy of school assessments of pupils' work is ensured through external moderation. Work with the local cluster of schools enables staff to share best practice and arrange joint activities for staff and pupils. Training with local and internal specialists increases staff expertise, improving teaching and pupils' learning.

High expectations are set for pupils, with staff leading by example as excellent role models. The school's vision and values are known and shared by all. The mission statement of 'Soaring to Success' sets the vision and direction of the school.

Through the school's accurate self-evaluation, staff are aware of what the school does best: the promotion of pupils' personal development and behaviour. They know that pupils' progress in writing, having improved, needs to be sustained and continue to improve, notably for the most able. They also know that the most able disadvantaged pupils, and the most able pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities need to reach the combined higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school has a strong safeguarding culture throughout. All of the required checks are made on staff before they join the school. Records are appropriately kept. The school has an appropriate safeguarding policy, which staff understand; they know what to do if they have any concerns. The school works effectively with agencies, parents and carers to keep pupils safe. Pupils feel safe in school and through the curriculum learn how to keep themselves safe, for example when using modern technology. Through up-to-date training and staff vigilance, leaders and the governing body have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry on this inspection was to look at the capacity of the governing body. This was because of the vacancies on the governing body, their extra responsibility across the federation with the infant school and the weaker writing outcomes for pupils in Year 6 in 2016. The governing body continues to have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas where improvements can be made. Members are committed to driving up pupils' achievement and providing the very best education for pupils. They regularly challenge school leaders through their rigorous scrutiny of all aspects of the school's performance. They ensure that pupils get the most out of the extra funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as the sport premium.
- The inspection's second line of enquiry concerned writing. In 2016, Year 6 pupils' achievements in writing continued to be lower than those published for reading and mathematics. Unpublished information for the academic year 2016/17, school records, and evidence seen in pupils' work show that school leaders and staff have worked hard to reverse this trend. Further staff training, including a consistent, persistent approach to developing pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills in aspects of their written work, have had a significant impact. As a result, across all year groups and in all subjects, pupils are making good progress in extending and developing their writing skills. In general, the quality of pupils' writing has caught up to meet the higher standards seen in their reading and mathematical work. You rightly focus on further improvements to increase pupils' progress in writing, particularly for the most able pupils.
- My third line of enquiry looked at what the school was doing to support disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs

and/or disabilities. Since the previous inspection, a considerable number of changes have been made that are enabling the most vulnerable pupils to do well in all aspects of their work and school life. Staff training and carefully targeted support has increased pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Small-group work with experienced and well-trained staff helps pupils in all year groups to make better progress than in the past. For example, they are better prepared for learning a new topic because staff prepare them in advance for the topic to be covered in their next lesson. Also, follow-up sessions are used to ensure that the pupils have remembered what they have learned and can demonstrate they have a good understanding. Strong communication and record-keeping keeps staff informed about what each pupil has achieved and the next steps in their learning. You have identified that the most able pupils in these groups need to be able to demonstrate their capability through reaching the combined higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

- My final line of enquiry considered what the school had done to improve the provision of sporting activities and physical education. In our initial meeting, you identified this as an area that the school had been focusing on to improve the impact of the additional funding provided by the government. Since the previous inspection, the number and range of clubs and activities for pupils has considerably increased. Pupils told me how much they enjoyed these opportunities, which is demonstrated by the increasing numbers of pupils participating in them. By working alongside highly skilled coaches, staff, as well as pupils, are developing good levels of physical skills. This work enables staff to continue to provide improved learning experiences for the pupils in the absence of the specialist coaches.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in writing is sustained and continues to improve, notably that of the most able
- the most able pupils who are disadvantaged reach the combined higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics
- the most able pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities reach the combined higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Steffi Penny
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, other leaders, and members of the governing body. I spoke with pupils during lessons and met members of the school council. Together, along with the deputy headteacher, we scrutinised the quality of pupils' work. I took account of the 59 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, I considered the 22 responses by staff and the 13 responses by pupils to Ofsted's electronic questionnaire.

I considered a wide range of documentary evidence, including records relating to safeguarding, the quality of teaching, the curriculum, assessment information, the school's self-evaluation, and behaviour records.