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Mrs C Whittingham
Acres Hill Community Primary School
Mather Road
Littledale
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S9 4GQ

Dear Mrs Whittingham

No formal designation inspection of Acres Hill Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 28 September 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you and your colleagues gave me and for the time you took to discuss behaviour in your school.

The inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills was concerned about behaviour at the school.

Evidence

I checked the school's arrangements for keeping children safe and for recruiting staff who are suitable to work with children. I met with you, senior and middle leaders, a group of pupils, the chief executive officer of the Sheffield South East Trust and a representative of the local authority.

I visited lessons and observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime. Throughout the day, I spoke with pupils about behaviour and safety in the school. I spoke with parents at the start and the end of the school day.

Having evaluated the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to improve behaviour and secure consistently positive attitudes to learning.

Context

The school is larger than the average-sized primary school with 320 pupils on roll, aged three to 11. Three out of 10 pupils are disadvantaged and supported through the pupil premium. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language is well above average. The school converted to an academy on 1 December 2016, joining the Sheffield South East Trust which was also established on 1 December 2016. When its predecessor school, Acres Hill Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2015, it was judged inadequate overall with personal development, behaviour and welfare requiring improvement. There have been significant changes in leadership and teaching staff since the opening of the academy.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Since the school became an academy, you, the governors and the trust have taken decisive action to stabilise staffing. There are many new teachers and new leaders. Morale is high and staff support you in making sure that pupils behave well.

In the last term, you and your new leadership team spent a considerable amount of time introducing a new system of rewards and sanctions to improve behaviour. After consultation with parents, pupils and staff, you established a clear set of guidelines for rewarding pupils for good behaviour or dealing with any misdemeanours. All staff, parents and pupils I spoke with said that this has had an immense effect on improving behaviour. Pupils are very keen to behave well and to earn green cards and prizes for good behaviour. However, there are still times when behaviour slips, particularly during lessons.

Some teachers use the new behaviour system very well indeed. They have high expectations of behaviour and the work pupils produce. Lessons are interesting and children progress well and are keen to learn. When work set matches the needs of pupils well, their attitudes to learning are very positive. When this is not the case, pupils lose concentration, attitudes to learning are variable and they do not take enough pride in their work. Although reducing quickly, there are still incidents of poor behaviour and red cards are given. At these times, staff are well supported by leaders. Parents are informed quickly and are supportive of the school's actions.

Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. In the playground, pupils are supervised very well and enjoy playing together. They are very active during breaks, playing hockey or football or using the trim trail. Pupils socialise well together and 'playground buddies' make sure that no pupils are left out. Pupils in key stage 2 enjoyed completing the 'daily mile', circuits of the school's playground at breaktime, with staff. In key stage 1, pupils are happy and confident in playing together. Children in early years were cooperating well with each other and enjoying their

learning in the recently built surroundings.

Pupils told me that they are safe and enjoy school. They said that bullying does occur, usually physical, but there is very little this year because pupils are behaving much better than in the past. They said that some pupils who were badly behaved have left and this shows in school records. They are confident that should bullying occur, the school takes action to stop it. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay safe, particularly when using the internet. At lunchtime and breaktime, there are many adults who supervise pupils and pupils are cared for well.

Good relationships exist between staff and pupils. The school is a calm and orderly place to be. You have made sure that staff have been trained to treat all pupils with dignity and respect at all times. They speak respectfully with children even when behaviour is not good. This sets a good example to all pupils and consequently pupils are responding well. Pupils are polite and courteous, holding doors open for each other and for adults. Those who are new to the school were keen to tell me how quickly they have made friends.

You and your assistant headteachers have established a range of strategies to support pupils who are still finding it difficult to settle into school. For example, early morning exercise for some pupils before they go to class is helping them settle well to their learning. With the help of the trust, you have identified pupils' specific learning and behaviour needs more precisely than in the past. There is skilful use of this information by staff to help pupils learn and behave well, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Occasionally, teaching assistants focus too much on establishing good conduct rather than supporting pupils in their learning.

You have taken steps to improve attendance and punctuality. Your attendance team visits the homes of those regularly absent to make sure that they are safe and to encourage them to attend regularly. Their work is improving attendance and punctuality, although you are aware that more needs to be done to meet your aspirations. Exclusions have been above average in the past two terms, but there have been none this year because behaviour has improved.

Parents said that they were concerned about behaviour in the past. They were generally positive about your work in improving behaviour, although some still have reservations, as they say it is early days yet.

Governors have supported the school well during turbulent times. They have resolved staffing instability and employed more leaders to support your work. They make sure that they receive comprehensive information about the school from the trust and the local authority to hold leaders to account. Information on the school website is not up to date and does not meet requirements for publication.

The trust and the local authority support the school very well. Joint training sessions

with the school and good schools in the trust have supported improvements in personal development, behaviour and welfare for pupils and the quality of teaching. Joining the trust has made recruitment considerably easier for the school. New teachers say that they were encouraged to apply for posts because of the trust's work in sharing good practice. Previously, the school had found it difficult to recruit staff.

Safeguarding is effective. Staff are well trained and vigilant. There is a strong culture of keeping children safe. Staff know what is expected of them and to whom they should report concerns. The school engages well with the parents of vulnerable children and uses external agencies to support the safety of these pupils. There are effective systems to keep children safe at the school's breakfast club.

Priorities for further improvement

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff are consistent in the way the new behaviour system is used to ensure that pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good
- work set matches pupils' needs and abilities so they engage fully in learning, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- staff's expectations are consistently high so that pupils take pride in their work and present it well
- attendance is at least average and pupils' punctuality is improved
- the website provides all required information.

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

Yours sincerely

Jim McGrath

Ofsted Inspector