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Mrs Sarah Evans
Principal
Cranford Park Academy
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Dear Mrs Evans

Short inspection of Cranford Park Academy

Following my visit to the school on 21 November 2017 with Kanwaljit Singh, Ofsted Inspector, 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You provide strong, determined leadership and staff respond well to your high expectations. You and other leaders have accurately evaluated the school's strengths and areas for development and are clear about how to achieve the very best for your pupils. You work closely and effectively with a strong governing body to ensure that the school continues to improve. In 2017, pupils achieved well at the end of key stages 1 and 2. You have ensured that the progress of key stage 2 pupils has improved. However, they make stronger progress in writing and mathematics than in reading.

Leaders have responded well to the action points from the previous inspection. These included raising the quality of teaching, improving pupils' writing across the curriculum and improving the progress of the most able pupils. The school has secured a strong team of staff who are committed to improving pupils' outcomes. Professional development for all staff sits at the heart of the school's work. The benefits of good-quality training are seen in the planning and teaching of engaging lessons that excite the pupils. For example, pupils in Year 3 showed great enthusiasm for 'stealing' ideas in poetry and could talk about how this would make their own poems much better. The work in pupils' books suggests that they are now making good progress in writing, in both English and the wider curriculum. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary well because it is effectively used by staff. However, there is still a need to focus on presentation and accurate punctuation. The most able pupils are challenged to think for themselves in class by effective questioning

and, on occasion, through additional interventions beyond the classroom. While there is evidence of generally good levels of challenge in mathematics, there are times when the most able are not stretched to attain the standards of which they are capable.

The school is an orderly environment where pupils behave well and learn to respect others. The school promotes equality through its house system and by ensuring that pupils learn about the community, different cultures and faiths. They are taught about democracy and take part in elections. When an incident such as racial name-calling has occurred, this has been logged and appropriate action has been taken, including informing parents. During the inspection, pupils talked confidently about respecting one another, including respecting each other's faiths and backgrounds.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed, showing effective and regular work with external agencies; early help is used well to support pupils and their families, and referrals to social care are swiftly managed. Leaders work closely with parents to establish positive, open working relationships and provide detailed information about where to obtain additional support.

Governors and staff receive good-quality training in safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty. Staff are aware of how to respond to concerns due to the effective, regular training and updates that they receive. They speak confidently about the swift response they receive from the designated safeguarding lead to any concerns that they raise.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about pupils being safe in school. Intervention is offered in school to support the emotional development of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Pupils are taught how to be safe. They said that they can speak to any adult if they have a concern. They are aware of how to stay safe when using the internet.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed three areas of focus for the inspection. The first of these was pupils' attendance. In 2016/17, pupils' overall attendance was below the national average and it was low for pupils in particular groups.
- Leaders have implemented strategies to improve pupils' attendance. Clear procedures are in place to support pupils who are persistently absent, including home visits and support for families. A rewards system has also been successful in promoting good attendance. Even so, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities remains too low.
- Our second focus was to explore the progress of different groups of pupils in reading. This is because, in 2017, Year 6 pupils' progress in reading was not as good as that in other subjects. You and the leadership team responded swiftly to

this and have successfully made reading a priority throughout the school.

- In the early years, children gain a sound knowledge of phonics, which they use to read the words associated with their work and play, both indoors and outdoors. For example, teachers in Reception used 'The tiger who came to tea' effectively to inspire learning. This book really came to life when the children created their own puppet show of the story. They spoke in detail about the different characters, demonstrating how they would respond to one another.
- Pupils choose a variety of books independently and with their parents, using two well-resourced libraries. 'Reading ambassadors' in Year 1 through to Year 6 support the high profile of reading. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their reading and do this regularly through debates and drama activities. For example, a 'freeze-frame' drama activity gave pupils the opportunity to consider how the character in the story would portray his feelings. The pupil premium grant is used to provide extra support for any disadvantaged pupils who are not making the expected progress in their reading.
- Reading skills are also developed across the curriculum. For example, in mathematics, pupils were challenged to read and understand complex word problems. However, as shown in the reading heard by inspectors, there is more work to do to give pupils the skills they need to tackle new words and to make inferences from text.
- The final focus for the inspection was to explore how well pupils are supported to achieve in subjects beyond English and mathematics, particularly science. This is because outcomes in science were not as strong as in other subjects and writing across the curriculum was an action point in the previous inspection report.
- Teaching and learning in science are effective and pupils are making good progress. In a Year 6 class, for example, pupils thoroughly enjoyed learning through investigation while being skilfully questioned by the specialist science teacher. Pupils asked appropriate questions themselves and developed skills and knowledge successfully.
- Specialist teachers are used effectively to promote high-quality teaching and learning in a range of subjects. They lead lessons alongside class teachers in order to further develop professional practice, while providing pupils with expert teaching. Pupils find these subjects interesting, citing the topics they study, including the Tudors and the Second World War and subjects such as art and music, as examples of enjoyable learning.
- Teaching across the curriculum has been improved by the introduction of more focused assessment systems. In science, pupils now sit an end-of-topic test to check that they have made the expected progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers further develop pupils' reading skills so that they know how to tackle new words and think more deeply about the meaning of the text

- pupils make good progress in writing in key stage 2 through consistently high expectations of punctuation and presentation in writing
- strategies to improve attendance have a particular focus on those groups of pupils whose attendance remains low.

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

Yours sincerely

Donna Chambers
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection began with a discussion about your self-evaluation of the school and what you and your deputy headteacher consider to be the current strengths of the school. We also discussed areas for improvement and agreed the key lines of enquiry. Discussion with governors was focused on the key lines of enquiry. I also met with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors looked at school documentation, including the self-evaluation, minutes of meetings of the governing body, behaviour records and attendance logs. Inspectors visited classrooms with you and your deputy, speaking with pupils and looking at their work. Inspectors considered the views of parents through discussions in the playground and from the 56 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, the 103 responses to the staff survey were considered. Inspectors reviewed a large sample of books to look at the standards of pupils' work.