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Mr Des Martin
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Martin

Short inspection of Hill Top CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 November 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 January 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your vision, for all pupils to be successful and their personal, social and academic needs to be fully met, is shared by staff and governors. The school values of compassion, forgiveness, thankfulness and responsibility underpin your work. There is a welcoming and caring atmosphere in the school. You place great importance on building pupils' confidence and nurturing their resilience. This means that pupils across the school exhibit good behaviour when learning and are keen to learn from their mistakes.

A Christian ethos extends through the work of the school. The school motto, 'Catch the Spirit', is evident in all areas of school life. One member of staff commented, 'The school places the pupils at the heart of decisions and strives to provide experiences and opportunities to ensure they catch the spirit.' You place high importance on establishing strong partnerships with parents and carers. The parents I talked to commented that the school supports families well and staff are very approachable. Parents talk very positively about the work of the parental involvement worker in particular. The vast majority of parents are overwhelming positive about the school. Shine time, for example, enables parents to regularly celebrate success with their children.

An area for improvement in the school's previous inspection was to ensure that

development planning has clear targets. You have ensured that the school development plan focuses on the main priorities for improvement and that all staff and governors know what these are. For example, there are a clear set of actions to ensure that the attainment gaps between boys and girls in key stage 1 continue to reduce. The incorporation of interim milestones and clear targets and success criteria into the development plan means that actions are evaluated accurately and further improvements are easily identified. This ensures that both staff and governors are very clear about the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Pupils' very positive attitudes towards learning continue to be a strength of the school. Pupils told me that they enjoy lessons and coming to school. As a result, their attendance is above the national average. Pupils feel well supported by their teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils show respect and tolerant attitudes. One pupil told me that they are taught to treat people as they would like to be treated themselves. During visits to lessons we saw pupils engaged in learning and working well together, sharing ideas and supporting each other. Pupils are confident to ask, as well as answer, questions in class. Pupils appreciate the leadership opportunities available to them. For example, standing for head boy and head girl in school elections and supporting younger pupils through the buddy system. Pupils also appreciate the wider range of enrichment opportunities, which help pupils to develop their wider skills. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their education.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff understand the important role they play in keeping pupils safe. They know what signs to look out for and are alert in reporting any concerns. You ensure that staff and governors participate in a range of safeguarding training. Safeguarding training records are up to date. Referrals to outside agencies are made in a timely manner to ensure that families receive early help and support.

You and governors ensure that safer recruitment procedures are followed. Vetting checks on staff meet statutory requirements. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding visits the school regularly and talks to both staff and pupils. There is a regular safeguarding agenda item at governing body meetings. As a result, there is a rigorous focus on keeping children safe.

Pupils report that they feel safe in school. Pupils are taught about internet safety in assemblies and through activities within lessons. As a result, they are aware of how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils told me bullying is rare. If it does happen, pupils feel confident that it is dealt with quickly. Pupils report that there is always someone to talk to if they have any concerns.

Inspection findings

- In 2017, based on provisional outcomes, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 was in the top 10% nationally for mathematics and reading, but was average in writing. Boys' attainment in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 was below the national average in respect of the proportion attaining a greater depth of understanding and was below that of girls. As a result, you have made writing across the curriculum a main priority for improvement, with a particular focus on reducing gaps in attainment in writing between girls and boys by the end of key stage 1.
- You have reviewed the key stage 1 curriculum. As a result, you have incorporated a wider range of topics to engage boys. This is beginning to have a positive effect. During lesson visits we saw more boys engaged in learning, willing to answer questions and participate in the lesson. Boys were enthusiastic about the topics they were studying. You have also ensured that parents have access to topic overviews on the website, so that they can support their children's learning at home. An increasing number of parents are attending parent workshops on the curriculum. For example, your recent workshop on mathematics skills was well attended by parents. However, despite improvements you know there is more work to do to ensure that attainment gaps between boys and girls in mathematics, by the end of key stage 1, are reduced further.
- Since the previous inspection, the approach to writing across the curriculum has been developed by providing opportunities for pupils to write more widely across the curriculum. Pupils are being more challenged in their writing. There is evidence in pupils' books of different styles of writing, for example in history, geography and religious education. Opportunities to practise spelling, punctuation and grammar are now integrated across subjects. There is a focus on speech and language in the early years, to extend children's vocabulary. The school's current assessment shows that an increasing number of pupils are working at the higher standard in writing. However, you acknowledge that more needs to be done so that a greater proportion of pupils, particularly the most able, achieve at the higher standard in writing by the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a considerable investment in professional development opportunities for staff. As a result, teachers share ideas about teaching and learning more regularly and this helps to spread best practice. The effect of this training was evident when we visited lessons and talked to pupils about their learning. For example, more effective questioning was observed and this ensured that pupils are challenged to a greater extent. During visits to lessons we also saw teachers addressing pupils' misconceptions. This enabled pupils to close gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Pupils also talked positively about opportunities to edit and improve their work. However, this is not embedded across the curriculum. Problem-solving is also a feature of pupils' learning. This is particularly evident in mathematics where pupils are also given greater opportunities to develop their reasoning skills.
- From their different starting points pupils make good progress in reading. Provisional results indicate that a higher proportion of pupils than the national average met the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. In 2017, the progress that Year 6 pupils made in reading was in the top

10% nationally, based on provisional outcomes. This is because you have created a reading culture across the school. Pupils have access to books and reading material in every classroom. Most pupils enjoy reading. Increasing numbers of pupils are reading for pleasure.

- Governors ensure that the funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their different starting points. There is very little difference in the attendance rates of disadvantaged pupils compared to their peers.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- opportunities for writing are embedded across the wider curriculum so that a greater proportion of pupils achieve at the higher standard in writing by the end of Year 6
- the attainment gaps between boys and girls in key stage 1 continue to reduce.

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

Yours sincerely

Michele Costello
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I made visits to lessons with you and your deputy headteacher. I also looked at the work in pupils' books with the literacy and numeracy co-coordinator. I met with you, a number of staff and four governors, including the chair of the governing body. I held a telephone call with a representative from the local authority.

I took account of 42 responses from parents to Ofsted's survey, Parent View. I met with a group of pupils. I also spoke to some parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day.

I examined a range of documents, including the school development plan, the school's self-evaluation, assessment information, governors' minutes, the headteacher's reports, attendance and behaviour logs, exclusion and attendance data and safeguarding records.