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Andrew Crossley
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Crossley

Short inspection of Carrfield Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 29 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 November 2017.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching so that more was outstanding. However, you took over the leadership of the school at a point when the quality of teaching overall was not effective. Consequently, there was a dip in pupils' results in 2016. You have led the school through a period of turbulence and have brought about rapid improvements over the year and a term in which you have presided. You have worked hand in glove with Astrea colleagues to evaluate accurately the quality of teaching and learning and to support those teachers who needed to raise their game. You have eradicated ineffective teaching, losing some staff along the way, but have recruited effective teachers who are keen to learn and to work hard for the benefit of pupils in the school.

From a low baseline, improvements in teaching have led to better pupils' outcomes in almost all indicators. In 2017, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined, although still below national figures, improved by 22%. Pupils' attainment was below national averages in reading. However, pupils' progress was broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. In key stage 1 in 2017, pupils' attainment was in line with their peers nationally in reading, and above in writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the Year 1 phonics check matched the national figure.

You have introduced new systems and tightened up procedures, ensuring a high degree of consistency in the way that staff deal with pupils' behaviour, plan and deliver lessons and carry out assessment of pupils' work. You, your staff and the trust are intent on improving pupils' life chances and preparing them well for the next stage of their education. You are successfully raising expectations across the school and pupils are well placed to achieve higher standards next year.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors are vigilant in their duty to keep pupils safe. The site is suitably secure, and policies and procedures have been regularly reviewed to ensure that they reflect the latest safeguarding guidance. Staff take care to manage risks for pupils, and assessments are in place for day-to-day activities. Staff have all been trained to identify pupils who may be at risk and have undertaken additional training to prevent pupils from being at risk of radicalisation. Pupils' case files show that timely actions and referrals are being made by the school.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I wanted to establish: how effective senior and middle leaders are in their roles; whether improvements seen this year are sustainable into the future; whether pupils learn about a wide range of subjects; and the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' learning. I also looked at how effective support is for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and for those who are disadvantaged, and what is done to improve pupils' attendance.
- You have introduced robust systems for recording and tracking the progress of all pupils. You and your leaders regularly hold staff to account to ensure that all pupils make the good progress of which they are capable. Assessment information for current pupils and work seen in their books show that the vast majority of pupils are making strong progress. The focus of all staff on disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities has ensured that these pupils are making progress that is in line with, or better than, other pupils in school.
- You and your staff successfully increased pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics last year. You have introduced a new approach to the teaching of reading, and this is helping pupils to gain a better understanding of the texts they are reading.
- Pupils are excited about the wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities now available to them. You have selected trips that help to develop pupils' subject knowledge. For example, the recent Year 6 trip to France enabled pupils to use their French. This academic year, you have turned your attention to refining the broader curriculum. You have developed detailed planning to support the delivery of these subjects. However, books show that although pupils are practising their grammar and writing in English, opportunities to write independently, at length, are not consistently planned in other subjects.

- You ensure the accuracy of assessment information through regular meetings with local schools and with other schools within the trust. These meetings have enabled your staff to compare the work of pupils and to reach secure judgements on the standards in Carrfield. You have welcomed the opportunity to be part of a national initiative to compare standards in writing. The local authority and the trust have checked pupils' writing at the end of key stages 1 and 2 and have found teachers' assessment to be accurate. You have applied the same rigour to assessment in science and, this year, are assured that assessment information more accurately reflects what pupils know and can do in this subject.
- You have recruited a new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). She has been well supported by you and a consultant from the Astrea trust and has developed effective systems to follow the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. She has worked well with external agencies and uses the funding well to ensure that pupils get the support they need. Due to the school's thorough and effective identification of pupils' needs, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making progress at least in line with that of other groups of pupils in school, although the attainment of some pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities lags behind that of others.
- You and your leaders use additional funding effectively and carefully track the progress of disadvantaged pupils and make sure that teachers are providing well for them. Effective teaching is ensuring that disadvantaged pupils are currently making progress that is close to, and in some classes exceeds, that of other pupils in school.
- Sixty percent of children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities below those typically seen. You have installed a new outdoor play area that enables staff to meet the needs of children much more successfully. Sensitive and carefully planned teaching helps children to make good progress through the year. In 2017, 77% of children achieved a good level of development, which is above the national average.
- You introduced a new policy to encourage pupils' good behaviour. I observed a calm learning environment in classes and a peaceful atmosphere around school. Pupils are responding well to teachers promoting the '5 dispositions' of 'contribution, empathy, aspiration, happiness and resilience'. In learning about these characteristics, one pupil wrote, 'Resilience is where you never give up [and] you believe in yourself.'
- Your teachers are delivering 'inspire' mornings to inform parents about how their children will be taught and what they can do to provide support at home. These events are well attended and are helping to improve communication between school and home. However, 10 of the parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, would not currently recommend the school to other parents, and indicated that there is more work needed to involve parents and help them to understand what is happening in school.
- You have tightened up procedures to manage pupils' attendance, and the learning mentor provides effective support. Thus, attendance and punctuality are improving and overall attendance is now in line with national figures. However, too many pupils are still persistently absent, missing valuable learning time as a

result.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- appropriate actions are taken so that pupils' attainment in reading continues to rise
- you continue to develop pupils' learning across the curriculum, including exploiting opportunities for pupils to develop their writing
- communications with parents continue to improve
- further support is given to pupils and their families to continue to reduce persistent absence.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I was able to discuss the work of the school with you and your staff. We visited classrooms together to observe teaching and learning. I was able to look at pupils' work in books and to speak with pupils throughout the day. Discussions with your school improvement partner, the chief executive of the Astrea trust and a member of the transition management board helped to provide additional information. School documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website were also taken into account. I looked at the online questionnaire, Parent View, to gather 21 parents' views about the school.