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Mr Roy Gunning
Headteacher
Stakesby Community Primary School
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Dear Mr Gunning

Short inspection of Stakesby Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 February 2018, 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Your plans for school improvement include projects to increase pupils' attendance, develop their love of reading and maximise their progress. These priorities mirror the provisional key lines of enquiry that I developed during my planning for the inspection.

Pupils told me that they enjoy attending your school. Their parents are overwhelmingly happy with all that the school provides. One reflected the views of many, when writing, 'To see happy, smiling children entering school on a morning says a lot!' Pupils willingly take on roles of responsibility in and around school. For example, members of the friendship team ensure that playtimes are happy and harmonious. Relationships are very strong throughout the school.

Your pupils have very positive attitudes towards, and a thirst for, learning. They were recently inspired by a Nobel lecture given by Malala Yousafzai. Year 2 pupils told me how 'One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world.' Your pupils value their education highly.

Leaders have appropriately addressed the areas for development that inspectors

identified at the time of the last inspection. Actions taken by leaders during the 2016/17 academic year led to what you describe as a 'step change' in pupils' enthusiasm for writing. As a result, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard for writing at the end of the Reception Year and key stages 1 and 2 was far higher at the end of the 2016/17 academic year than it was in January 2014.

You have implemented a new approach to coaching and mentoring your staff. They value their regular developmental communications with you and your deputy headteacher through individual and online learning blogs. Their responses to your comments are both insightful and reflective. Appraisal systems are strong and influential in improving teaching across the school.

Leaders have broadened pupils' horizons and raised their aspirations. Pupils talk about cultures and religions, which are different from their own, knowledgeably and sensitively. Parents are happy with the range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities that the school provides. One parent, for example, wrote that their child 'attends three after-school clubs, is a member of the school choir, takes part in sporting activities and competitions, attends PTA events and has trumpet lessons'.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Following some turbulence in staffing, you took over the maintenance of the school's record of recruitment checks. The record is accurate and reflects the school's procedures to recruit staff safely.

You and your staff know the pupils and their families very well. You have developed strong strategies to ensure that all staff are fully aware of any safeguarding and child protection issues that arise. For example, through the whole-staff briefing that occurs at the start of each school day. You, as designated safeguarding lead, work well with a wide range of external agencies, such as health visitors and social care, to ensure that vulnerable pupils access the support to which they are entitled.

Pupils behave well in and around school. They have responded well to the school's ticks and crosses behaviour management initiative. All are well aware of the implications of gaining too many crosses. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe when working online. Even the youngest know the dangers inherent in giving out their personal information.

Leaders have taken assertive action to address the poor attendance of some pupils, including fining parents who take their children on holiday during term time. Although improving, pupils' attendance remains below the national average. Too many are persistently absent and some still arrive late for school. These pupils do not access all of the educational experiences on offer. They do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Inspection findings

- Leaders, including governors, have very high aspirations for the pupils who attend Stakesby. Based on the school's published assessment information, leaders have identified key projects for development precisely. The targets, against which governors are expected to evaluate the success of the school's improvement projects, are not as incisive. For example, leaders expect that 25% of pupils will exceed age-related expectations in all year groups and in all subjects by the end of the current academic year. This universal target does not take pupils' starting points into consideration. It is too challenging in some areas of the school's work and not challenging enough in others.
- Despite a focus on the attainment and progress of the most able pupils, leaders acknowledge that there is still some way to go. Leaders' observations of teaching and learning in classrooms, analysis of assessment information and checks of pupils' work indicate that not enough pupils are making rapid progress to exceed the expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There is some disparity between children's attainment on entry to the early years and leaders' perceptions of attainment on entry. Inspection evidence indicates that the vast majority of children who entered the Reception Class at the beginning of the current academic year did so with the skills and abilities that are typical for their age.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics is interrogated, as you said, 'forensically', following termly analysis of assessment information. Leaders identify pupils who need additional support to catch up with their peers. Currently, some phonics intervention activities do not lead to pupils making rapid progress. Your deputy headteacher identified that these pupils are not active learners during phonics sessions and do not get an equal share of adults' time consistently. Phonics groups that are taught in thoroughfares within the school are interrupted too often. The pupils in these groups find it difficult to concentrate and maintain their attention. Their learning suffers. They do not catch up quickly.
- Developing a love of reading is a key project for the whole school. A successful bid for additional funding has kick-started this initiative. Pupils are pleased that leaders are developing a 'proper' library in its communal space. They are looking forward to having a wider range of books to read. Teachers and teaching assistants are also delighted to have a budget to create a dedicated reading space in their classrooms. Your subject leader for English has created a buzz about reading throughout the school.
- The introduction of a specific approach to reading comprehension in key stage 2 is bearing fruit. Pupils are increasingly able to infer and deduce non-literal meanings in texts. They are enthused by reading whole-class texts such as 'Cosmic' by Frank Cottrell-Boyce and 'Goodnight Mister Tom' by Michelle Magorian. Year 6 pupils entered into a challenging discussion with me about the meaning of sophisticated vocabulary and phraseology during the inspection.
- Leaders understand that developing pupils' phonics skills underpins all reading activities. The school's reading stock includes books from a variety of reading schemes, some of which are phonics based. These books are organised into coloured bands. Prior to this inspection, the subject leader for English had informed senior leaders that the school's stock of reading scheme books was not banded

appropriately. The words in some of the reading scheme books do not match precisely the sounds that pupils have been taught. This impedes pupils' ability to become confident readers quickly.

- Teachers' expertise in the delivery of phonics increased following support from a local authority adviser. Teachers also access support from an expert practitioner on the school's staff. Their subject knowledge shines through in their constant use of terms such as phoneme, grapheme, digraph and split digraph. Pupils follow their teachers' lead and use these subject-specific terms confidently. In addition, parents' understanding of phonics has increased following their attendance at workshops delivered by the school's expert practitioner. As a result of the school's actions, the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 check of phonics has increased over time.
- Leaders have set an ambitious target for 100% of the current cohort of Year 1 pupils to reach the phonics standard by the end of the academic year. I checked on the learning and progress of a number of pupils with low prior attainment during the inspection. These pupils use their knowledge of phonics to blend sounds together systematically. They read whole words well and with confidence. The school's target is a realistic ambition.
- Too many pupils who did not achieve the expected phonics standard at the end of Year 1 in 2016 did not achieve the standard again in Year 2. They were not well prepared for the increased demands of reading on entry to key stage 2. Staffing in Year 2 is much more stable this year. The current cohort of Year 2 pupils, especially those with low prior ability, are making more-rapid progress to complete the phonics programme of phases in a timely manner.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvement plans contain bespoke targets by which the progress of the most able pupils in reading, writing and mathematics can be evaluated incisively
- their evaluation of children's skills and abilities on entry to the early years is based on a thorough understanding of robust assessment information
- the planned re-banding of the school's stock of reading scheme books takes place quickly, so that all pupils read books which allow them to practise the phonics skills that they have been taught
- they have an accurate understanding of the rate at which pupils move through the phases of phonics learning so that slow progress can be addressed quickly.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will

be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Belita Scott
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I discussed the work of the school with you, the deputy headteacher, middle leaders and the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. A representative from North Yorkshire local authority discussed the school's work with me. I checked a range of documentation including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness and your improvement plans. In addition, I examined information about pupils' attendance, behaviour and achievements. I considered your analysis of the school's most recent surveys of parents' and pupils' views together with eight parental responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Alongside you and your deputy headteacher, I visited classes to observe teaching, learning and assessment. I checked the progress made by pupils in their workbooks, talked formally to a group of pupils from Years 2, 4 and 6, and talked more informally to pupils in lessons about their learning. I read with children from the Reception Class and pupils in Years 1, 2, 3 and 6.