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Dear Mr Wilkinson

Short inspection of Crescent Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You have very successfully shared your vision that pupils should be happy, well cared for and be 'the best they can be'. Staff, governors, parents and pupils alike are fully behind it. Your vision is encapsulated in the school's motto, 'Happiness, success and learning for life'. You are held in very high regard by the whole of the school community. Every member of staff said that they are proud to work at the school. Staff appreciate the investment you make in them by developing their skills and encouraging them to further their careers. Pupils told me, 'Mr Wilkinson is the best headteacher.' Parents, almost without exception, speak very highly of the school. They appreciate the support that their children and their families receive from staff at Crescent Primary School. One parent summed up the views of many by saying, 'It is a privilege to have my child at this school.'

Since the last inspection, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving situations. Pupils regularly practise their mental mathematical skills. In writing, leaders have introduced a revised approach to teaching grammar, punctuation and spelling. This approach is implemented consistently well throughout

the school. Teachers ensure that pupils' writing is linked to the topics they are studying or texts they are reading. Pupils' books show that they apply the skills they have learned in grammar, spelling and punctuation when they write at length in a range of subjects. In 2017, more pupils at the end of key stage 2 achieved the expected standard in spelling, punctuation and grammar than was seen nationally. Over 40% of pupils in that year achieved the higher standard by the end of Year 6.

Teachers use a system of four colour-coded challenges to provide pupils with work that matches their level of ability. Pupils' books show that they complete work that builds systematically on what they already know and can do. Teachers typically provide further challenge to those pupils who are ready to move on to more difficult work. Sometimes, teachers do not adapt their questions or instructions sufficiently well to pupils' abilities. This typically happens when the whole class is listening to the teacher together. The result is that the most able pupils do not have an opportunity to excel.

The outdoor area used by the Reception and Nursery classes has benefited from complete redevelopment since the last inspection. It is a bright, vibrant and inviting area in which children play, explore and learn enthusiastically.

In classes throughout the school, pupils show extremely strong attitudes to learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, and the pupils live up to them. They engage well because teachers make learning interesting. They achieve well because teachers ensure that pupils have the support they need. One pupil told me, 'Teachers make learning fun,' while another said, 'We just love learning.' Teachers provide a wide range of resources for pupils to use in mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants ask well-considered questions and remind pupils of previous learning. This helps them to improve their work and build on their skills. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to explain new ideas to pupils clearly.

Teachers and teaching assistants skilfully introduce pupils to new vocabulary at every opportunity. This is a common feature of lessons throughout the school. In one class, pupils in Year 3 were discussing the meaning of the word 'flimsy', while pupils in Year 6 were writing a poem entitled 'The Horologist's Workshop'. One pupil in Year 3 had written in her book, 'In the palace, the reflective white windows shimmered through the room.'

Pupils behave exceptionally well in classes and around school. They show very strong attitudes to their learning. They work hard and concentrate well in lessons, regardless of whether the task requires them to work on their own or with their classmates. Pupils' books are neatly kept, reflecting a real pride in their work. Pupils show their exemplary manners when they speak with adults and their friends.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding is of the highest priority at Crescent Primary School. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders make sure that all the necessary vetting checks take place before adults start to

work or volunteer at the school. The record of vetting checks is meticulously kept. Leaders and governors check frequently that all records are up to date. All staff have up-to-date training and know how to raise a concern about a child's welfare, should one arise. Detailed records are kept securely. Pupils' welfare is a standing item on the agenda at every staff meeting. This makes sure that this vital aspect of the school's work is kept at the forefront of everyone's minds.

The pupil and family support worker provides invaluable support. She draws upon the expertise of external services when this is appropriate. Several parents were keen to tell me how staff at the school have helped their families.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. The day before the inspection, they had enjoyed a 'safer internet' day. Pupils throughout the school had learned important information about how to use modern technology safely. Pupils told me that they are safe in school. They learn about bullying in different forms and proudly told me that bullying is very rare at Crescent Primary School. They were confident that, if it ever did happen, an adult would deal with it promptly and successfully. A representative from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children visits the school to teach pupils how to keep themselves safe from different kinds of abuse.

Inspection findings

- Other senior and middle leaders support you well. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths. They provide useful training for staff to improve their practice. They work alongside governors to check the improvements that are taking place and to consider where provision could be even better. Governors understand the governing body's responsibilities and are just as ambitious for the school as you are.
- You and the other members of the leadership team have developed a system for tracking the progress that pupils make from their starting points, rather than just within the current year group. You meet regularly with teachers to decide what needs to be done to help pupils to reach the standards of which they are capable. Your evaluations show that this approach allows you to check more closely that pupils are making strong progress.
- Children start in the Nursery or Reception class with skills that are usually below, and often well below, those typical for their ages. Pupils make strong progress during their years at Crescent Primary School. By the end of key stage 1, pupils are catching up with others of their age. By the end of Year 2, just over half the pupils have reached the expected standard for their age. By the end of Year 6 in 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in writing was just below the national figure. In reading and mathematics, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard exceeded the national figure. The progress that pupils made in each of reading, writing and mathematics was in the top 20% of that seen nationally.
- The school's assessment information shows that a large majority of pupils throughout the school, including those who are disadvantaged, make at least the

progress expected of them in English and mathematics, with many exceeding this expectation.

- During our tour of the school, we saw teachers and teaching assistants providing effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This helped them to learn well alongside their classmates.
- Pupils' books show that they make strong progress from their starting points. Teachers plan sequences of lessons that build on what pupils know and can do. Some books, however, show that teachers sometimes do not move pupils on swiftly enough to more difficult work.
- Teachers develop pupils' early reading skills well. Phonics lessons are lively. Teachers and teaching assistants encourage pupils to use the phonics skills they have learned when they read or write in all their lessons. Pupils told me that the two well-stocked libraries provide them with plenty of books to choose from. Pupils in Year 6 can act as reading leaders, helping the teacher who has responsibility for reading. They make sure that a range of high-quality books is available and that the books are well looked after. Pupils in each class study their class text together to improve their reading, comprehension and inference skills. Pupils engage well with these sessions because teachers use their strong subject knowledge and their own passion for reading to bring the story to life. One pupil told me that, when his teacher talks about books, it makes him want to read them.
- Teachers provide pupils with a rich and varied curriculum. It is enhanced by opportunities to broaden their horizons. Trips to the theatre, museums and the seaside and excursions on trains are commonplace. The school minibus is well used to take pupils to visit supermarkets and restaurants. Topics such as 'Could a polar bear live in Africa?' and 'Who was the greatest explorer – Christopher Columbus or Neil Armstrong?' capture pupils' interests. Pupils learn about a range of religions and cultures. Displays around the school celebrate aboriginal artwork and the life of Martin Luther King, for example. Pupils are respectful of those whose beliefs or lifestyles differ from their own. Pupils told me that it is important to get a good education. They show great ambition for their futures.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers more swiftly move pupils onto work that provides greater challenge when they are ready so that more pupils achieve the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Di Mullan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher and six other leaders. I also met with pupils, the pupil and family support worker, the school's business manager and a teacher who is new to the profession.

I met with 11 governors, including the chair of the governing body, and I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. Jointly with you and the deputy headteacher, I observed the learning taking place in a class from every year group and examined a range of pupils' books.

I spoke informally with pupils as we toured the school. I met a group of eight pupils and listened to two pupils reading. I paid a short visit to the breakfast club.

I examined a range of documentation, including that relating to the school's self-evaluation, its improvement plans and the safeguarding of pupils. I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school and considered the views of parents through the 104 responses to the online survey, Parent View. I also considered the 55 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and the 171 responses to one for pupils.