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Mrs Debbie Glover
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Glover

Short inspection of Poppleton Road Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Poppleton Road Primary School is a school where pupils are safe and feel safe. Parents are also pleased with the school, reporting that they feel their children make good progress and they are kept updated with key information on how their children are doing. Behaviour is good, with high expectations of pupils which allows them to focus on their learning and do their best. Teaching is effective and teachers plan engaging and varied activities, which meet pupils' needs closely. Teachers model and explain work clearly so that pupils know what to do and know how to make their work even better. There is little bullying in the school, as records show and as parents and pupils report. Where pupils or parents have had cause to report a concern, they say that the leaders deal with issues very quickly and effectively. All stakeholders believe you are doing a good job, that you are very visible and approachable and understand the school well.

At the last inspection, inspectors identified one main area for improvement, which was to continue to improve the quality of teaching in the school. This area for improvement was further refined by inspectors, by asking that improvements were made specifically in key stage 1 and in the teaching of mathematics and writing. Since that time, you and your team have worked successfully to improve teaching at key stage 1. Phonics is taught well and pupils learn their letters and sounds quickly. This helps them to develop their reading and writing skills rapidly and has contributed to improving outcomes in key stage 1. As a result, current pupils in key stage 1 are making strong progress in reading and writing, as well as in

mathematics. Writing at key stage 2 is now a strength. Pupils are reaching higher standards in writing by the time they leave the school. Reading and mathematics are also well taught at key stage 2. Pupils read widely, and often, and this helps them to develop a real passion for reading. In mathematics, pupils regularly reinforce their mathematical skills and move on to use and apply their learning across the curriculum. However, at times the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently enough to reach a higher standard.

Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. In your role as headteacher, you lead your staff well. You ensure that they are clear on the school's priorities and you are committed to ensure that the school continues to serve pupils' needs well. You work closely with other senior and middle leaders, as well as governors, to ensure that the action plans in place are well understood and are working to improve the school. To this effect, you and other leaders have adjusted your action plans to support disadvantaged pupils. These pupils' rates of progress have not been strong enough in the past. You have recognised and remedied this. The action plan is starting to have a positive impact on these pupils, whose progress is improving. It is also helping to diminish the attainment gaps between these pupils and their peers. Nevertheless, the implementation of the action plan is still in its early stages and you understand that to diminish the gaps fully, these action plans need to be reviewed to ensure that the work continues to have a positive impact on these pupils.

Since the last inspection, attendance has fluctuated, and it declined in 2017. However, the school's rigorous response to this issue has been effective and attendance has improved substantially this year. Part of this improvement has come from the engaging curriculum which pupils enjoy. There is a broad range of subjects on offer and learning is linked to a programme of trips and visitors. In this way, you are supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils speak highly of their varied experiences, including regular trips to a local church and to local museums. They report that values such as the respect, tolerance and celebration of diversity are very important to them. As such, they demonstrate these values every day and this contributes to their strong conduct and positive attitudes to school life.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that pupils are safe. Staff are regularly trained so that they know how to keep pupils safe and what to do if there are concerns around safety. The school keeps detailed records of any issues regarding safeguarding and there are strong working relationships with external agencies, with whom leaders liaise to support pupils and families, as necessary.

Pupils and parents report that bullying is rare. There are very few serious behaviour incidents and records show that pupils behave very well. All these factors help to keep pupils safe at school.

The school makes all the necessary checks on adults who work and volunteer in the

school. The records kept on these checks meet statutory requirements.

Inspection findings

- One focus during the inspection was pupils' progress in the key subjects. Different groups of pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes all groups at key stage 1. At key stage 2, the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who are most-able is improving and in writing it is strong. However, the most able pupils' progress is not as strong as that of their peers in reading and mathematics.
- An area that I looked at was the school's provision for special educational needs. The progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is good. These pupils' needs are well understood by leaders, who work closely with classroom teachers and teaching assistants. Therefore, teaching meets these pupils' needs well. Staff have received effective training and regularly check on the progress of these pupils.
- There is an increasing number of pupils joining the school for whom English is an additional language. Leaders are working hard to support these pupils and this is having a positive impact on these pupils' learning and welfare. However, you recognise that all staff need more training to support these pupils further in terms of learning English quickly so that they can fully access the curriculum and settle into school life.
- Another area I looked at was the provision for children in the early years. Children enter the early years with levels of development typically below what is expected. From these starting points, a very high proportion of children make rapid progress across the different learning areas and reach a good level of development. A high proportion also exceed this level by the end of Reception. This is due to strong leadership of the early years. There are also effective assessment systems in place. These systems help adults understand children's needs, and therefore children are provided with good support from adults as children engage with the varied activities set out for them in the provision, both indoors and outdoors.
- I also looked at how key stage 1 teaching has developed since the last inspection. In key stage 1, teaching is now particularly strong and meets pupils' needs well. Since the last inspection, an increasing proportion of pupils arrive into Year 1 well prepared for their learning. Teachers take advantage of this and provide challenging activities for pupils across the curriculum, which ensures that pupils make rapid progress over time. Teachers also provide pupils with the opportunity and resources to reflect on their own work and make improvements. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, relishing the chance to do their best.
- In key stage 2, teaching is also effective. Pupils make strong progress and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They are well behaved and learning is rarely disrupted. This has meant that since the last inspection, standards of teaching have been maintained. This is seen particularly in writing, where attainment is very strong. However, at times in reading and mathematics

disadvantaged and most-able pupils do not make progress which is as strong as that of other groups in school.

- I looked at your assessment systems to see how they contribute to teaching and pupils' learning. These systems are robust and accurate and help leaders to identify where there is any underachievement. For example, you are fully aware of the need for more challenge for the most able pupils, and the work needed to support disadvantaged pupils.
- You and other leaders also have rigorous monitoring systems in place to check the teaching in school. This has helped to inform bespoke training for staff which has led to better teaching standards in key stage 1 and to maintaining effective teaching at key stage 2 since the last inspection.
- Governors take their roles very seriously and have undertaken a review of their work to ensure that they meet the needs of the school. This has supported strong recruitment of new governors recently, and has given governors a clear understanding of their training needs. As a result, governors support and challenge the school well and have contributed to the strong provision in school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching in reading and mathematics at key stage 2 regularly provides the most able pupils with sufficiently challenging activities that will help them reach the highest levels of attainment of which they are capable
- action plans in place to support disadvantaged pupils' achievement are used and reviewed to ensure that they continue to have a positive impact on these pupils' outcomes
- training is provided for all staff to continue to meet the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona McNally
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited a number of classes in school to observe teaching and its impact on learning. I also looked at a wide range of pupils' books from all year groups, across a variety of subjects. I met with you and your governors and with other senior and middle leaders. I also held a telephone discussion with a representative from the

local authority. I looked at the school's information about the safeguarding of pupils and examined behaviour, attendance and bullying records. I also checked a range of other documentation, such as your self-evaluation, your school development plans and your monitoring information. I held formal discussions with pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 and spoke informally to pupils during breaktime. I also heard eight pupils read from Year 2 and Year 6. I considered the 75 parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to a number of parents in the playground, as they dropped their children off at school.