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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Simon Bannister
Headteacher
Breckenbrough School
Sandhutton
Thirsk
North Yorkshire
YO7 4EN

Dear Mr Bannister

Short inspection of Breckenbrough School

Following my visit to the school on 19 April 2018 with David Penny, Ofsted Inspector, 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 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

At the last inspection, your predecessor was asked to provide time for the new middle leaders to check and improve the quality and consistency of teaching in their areas and subjects. This time has been provided. Middle leaders are aware of their roles and responsibilities. They are fully supportive of your plans for improvement. Middle leaders share their practice more effectively. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school and have an appreciation of teachers' individual strengths and areas for development.

The last inspection also indicated that an area for development was improving the quality and consistency of teaching further. As a result of improvements, pupils' writing skills are developing, predominantly within English. However, the initiatives taken to date to improve the quality of teaching have not resulted in significant improvements in academic achievement for middle- and high-prior-attaining pupils.

The quality of education provided by the school has some elements of good practice. However, systems for measuring pupils' progress are new. Leaders and teachers do not take sufficient account of pupils' starting points in order to adjust teaching to accurately meet pupils' needs. As a result, the progress of some pupils is not as strong as it should be.

The social development of all pupils continues to be a strength of the school. From entry, a core plan is developed for each pupil which identifies their achievements and interests and their barriers to learning. The plan also includes strategies to support the pupil. This enables staff to get to know each pupil well. Your 'Tracking Social Progress' demonstrates whole-school improvements in the trust and relationships which have developed between pupils and between pupils and staff.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your governors have continued to prioritise pupils' safety, and the leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Leaders and managers check that all new staff are made aware of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', 2016, through their induction process. Leaders provide regular staff training and updates to ensure that safeguarding is effective. However, inspectors identified the need to strengthen procedures to assess the risks to pupils that might occur during the school day.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about their child's experience at Breckenbrough. The vast majority of parents state that their child is happy, safe, well looked after and making good progress. Pupils reported that most of the time they enjoy school. They feel respected and safe. Pupils say that teachers help them to do their best.

Inspection findings

- There have been significant changes to increase the capacity in senior leadership within the last year. You and your deputy headteacher are new to role. Two assistant headteachers have been internally appointed following a recent restructure. Staff report that they feel very well supported by you and are proud to work in the school.
- Similarly, the chair of governors, who was previously the vice-chair, was only appointed in January 2018. A number of other governors and trustees have changed since your appointment. Governors challenge school leaders, especially through regular visits with an agreed focus, leading to greater accountability for school staff.
- The intervention programmes put in place by the special educational needs coordinator are well planned to address pupils' needs and emerging gaps in their progress. You have introduced a model to offer greater challenge and support to enhance the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress respectively. However, as these systems are newly introduced, it is too soon to report on their impact.
- You have introduced new assessment systems this academic year to measure pupils' starting points in core subject areas and to enable more precise tracking of pupils' progress. However, leaders have not been sufficiently robust in using these systems to ensure that pupils remain on track to achieve their targets.
- Pupils' progress is declining between lower key stage 3 and upper key stage 4. Pupils, particularly middle and higher prior attainers, have made less progress than lower

prior attainers from their starting points. In some classes, learning is well matched to pupils' needs and the support provided for them is effective. However, this is not the case in all classes. Progress is not consistent in all subjects and areas across the school. Some gaps were evident in continuity and progression in pupils' books, including significant omissions when a teacher had been absent for several weeks.

- You and other leaders support and manage behaviour effectively. You regularly reinforce well-established Quaker values, closely linked to British values. You model expected behaviour. You use a clear 'restorative' approach to help pupils work together to solve issues. Pupils who require additional interventions for their behaviour have comprehensive support plans. Physical intervention and exclusion rates are low, and all serious incidents are recorded and monitored appropriately.
- The majority of pupils report that the behaviour of other pupils around school is good. While they acknowledge that issues such as bullying do occur, they also say that teachers work effectively to resolve any issues. Pupils say that there is always an adult they can talk to if they are worried about anything. Almost all staff agree that pupils' behaviour is at least good. The school has a culture that encourages calm and orderly conduct, because leaders support staff well in managing behaviour.
- You regularly admit an increasing number of pupils into different year groups throughout the year. Some pupils are supported by being eased gradually into school on part-time timetables. There are a small number of pupils who do not attend for various reasons. While improvements have been made this year, attendance remains much lower than the national average, and persistent absence is significantly higher than the national figure for all pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - embedding the new recording systems and using progress information to set challenging targets for pupils based on their starting points
 - ensuring that learning is closely matched to pupils' needs so that they make at least good progress
- strengthen the policies and procedures that govern the management of risks to pupils during the school day
- work closely with pupils, parents and guardians to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence further.

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

Chris Lingard
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, your deputy head, the special educational needs coordinator, the chair of governors and middle leaders, and spoke with the school's external adviser.

Inspectors read a range of documents, including your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and minutes of meetings and school visits by the governing body. We also checked information about records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching and those regarding safeguarding.

Inspectors visited classes on a learning walk, accompanied by the assistant headteacher in charge of teaching and learning. Longer observations of learning were also undertaken. We checked pupils' recording and progress in their books.

Inspectors considered 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with two parents. We also took into consideration 16 responses from pupils and 26 responses from staff to their online questionnaires.