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Mrs Judith Ratcliffe
Headteacher
Harrogate, Bilton Grange Primary School
Bilton Lane
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Dear Mrs Ratcliffe

Short inspection of Harrogate, Bilton Grange Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 April 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 March 2015.

This school continues to be good.

A strong leadership team, led by a highly motivated headteacher and deputy headteacher, has maintained and, in some areas, improved the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your staff have an uncompromising desire to constantly improve, and this is clearly reflected in the good levels of attainment and progress that pupils achieve, particularly in key stage 2. A highly positive learning culture has been established, and attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils enjoy attending school, and they are rightly proud of their achievements and the collective achievements of the school as a whole. An attractive and stimulating environment for learning has been created. Parents and carers were effusive in their praise for the school both when interviewed and in their responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire. One parent commented: 'I cannot praise the school highly enough. We have been extremely happy with all aspects and it's a wonderful happy place where children can thrive.' In your school self-evaluation summary, you describe precisely what is working well and what needs further improvement.

Pupils are fully involved in the life of the school and talked with enthusiasm about the many opportunities offered to them. One older pupil remarked, 'Everyone's equal and everyone's treated the same,' while another said, 'We all respect the views of others.' A thriving school council organises various events while art, drama and sports leaders organise activities for their peers at lunchtime.

At the time of the last inspection, provision in the early years was identified as an area that required improvement. Significant work has been carried out successfully

by you and your leadership team to address this. The appointment of a new early years leader and improvements to the accommodation and the early years curriculum mean that this is now an area of great strength.

Teaching across the school is effective. Pupils in key stage 2 complete work that is well matched to their abilities, and the most able pupils are challenged to reach the highest levels and make the best possible progress. In 2017, your key stage 2 pupils' reading and writing statutory test results were significantly higher than the national averages, both at the expected and greater depth standards. At the end of key stage 1 in 2017, pupils' attainment was above the national figure for the expected standard but lower for the greater depth standard. A review of pupils' work highlights the need for greater challenge for the most able in key stage 1.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school has a strong safeguarding culture. You, senior leaders and governors have established policies and practice that are effective and fit for purpose. The record of safe recruitment checks on staff is appropriately detailed and meticulously maintained. Records show that senior leaders and governors have effectively supported pupils who have behaviour and mental health issues.

Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. Behaviour in classrooms and corridors and at lunchtimes is very good. Pupils reported that there are few incidents of poor behaviour and that aggressive behaviour and name-calling are not tolerated. They said that any incidents which occur are dealt with swiftly and that there is always someone to talk to if they have a concern. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and a good knowledge of potential dangers when using the internet. The views of the pupils were reinforced by their parents. Indeed, 99% of parents who responded to Ofsted's parent questionnaire agreed that their child 'feels safe' and is 'well looked after' at school, and many submitted written comments to inspectors praising staff for their caring approach.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry explored what you had done to improve provision for children in the early years following your last inspection. It is clear that significant work has been carried out to improve provision. A physical transformation of the two main teaching areas allows children access to a wide range of activities. The recently appointed early years leader articulated clearly the many changes and their impact. The curriculum has been reviewed and amended. Tightly focused teaching supports the key areas of phonics, number, reading and writing. During my visit, the children were reading 'The very hungry caterpillar'. The areas for learning, linked with this text, allowed for the development of communication, reading, writing, modelling, art, science and physical development. It was impressive to hear the children talking about the 'symmetrical butterflies' that they had painted and to see their writing skills developing in the 'bug lab'.
- Over the past three years, the percentage of children achieving a good level of development has increased steadily from 59% to 71%. The school's assessment

information shows that the percentage of children who are likely to achieve a good level of development in 2018 will exceed that of 2017. The percentage of children exceeding the expected standard in reading, writing and number is also likely to be higher, with over half being boys.

- Another line of enquiry related to pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Although figures for the 2017 cohort were broadly in line with the national average at the expected standard, they were significantly lower at the greater depth standard. They were also lower than the very high standards these pupils achieved in reading and writing. Training has been provided for staff, with an emphasis on developing strong calculation and problem-solving skills. During the inspection, we (along with the deputy headteacher/mathematics leader) observed mathematics being taught in all key stage 2 classes. We noted specific strengths in teachers' subject knowledge, the ways in which they modelled mathematical strategies, and a level of challenge appropriate to all abilities. Analysis of work in pupils' books confirms the mathematics leader's view that the current Year 6 pupils are making better progress from their starting points than previous cohorts.
- Key stage 1 results for 2016 and 2017 show that a large percentage of pupils in each cohort reached the standard expected for their age at the end of Year 2. However, the percentage reaching the higher standard was below the national figure for all areas in 2017 and for writing and mathematics in 2016. You and your senior leaders appreciate the need to challenge the most able robustly. The key stage 1 leader described a list of strategies that have been implemented successfully. These include closer checking of teaching, improved planning for progress, providing individual pupils' targets and setting up interventions to support and challenge the most able pupils. With specific regard to writing, 'word mats' are used to promote wider vocabulary, and pupils are now encouraged to draft and edit their work. Teachers have also created more opportunities to inspire boys to improve their reading and writing, such as the introduction of mythical tales story cards and a 'Goldilocks' crime scene investigation.
- Reading is a strength across the school. Year 1 phonics results are consistently higher than national averages. By the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading is at least 10% higher than national averages both at the expected and at the greater depth standards. Pupils demonstrate a love of reading and talked knowledgeably about their favourite authors. They read with fluency and expression.
- Pupils' skills in reading and writing contribute well to their learning in other subjects. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their key skills across different subjects are greater in some subjects and some classes than in others.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- writing standards in the early years and key stage 1 continue to improve
- the most able pupils in key stage 1 are challenged robustly, and this is reflected

in a higher percentage reaching the greater depth standard in reading, writing and mathematics

- subject leaders ensure that pupils apply the skills learned in English and mathematics across the whole curriculum and continue to strengthen the links between different subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, 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

Richard Knowles
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I looked specifically at safeguarding, provision for children in the early years, pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and pupils' attainment and progress in key stage 1.

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, senior leaders, your school business manager, office manager, the early years leader, the key stage 1 leader, one of the mathematics leaders, the chair of the governing body and other governors. I also had a meeting with the trust's chief executive officer. I evaluated documentation, including the school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plans, assessment information, behaviour records and the Yorkshire Collaborative Academy Trust school review. I spoke with a number of parents at the beginning of the day and met with two groups of pupils from a range of year groups. You and I visited all key stage 2 classes together and observed mathematics. We also visited a lesson in which technology was used to enhance reading comprehension skills, and a key stage 1 'same day' intervention. We also spent time in the early years unit to view areas of provision. I carried out a scrutiny of pupils' writing and mathematics work. I also reviewed responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and responses to Ofsted's online surveys of pupils' and staff's views.