

5 July 2018

Andrew Krabbendam
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Krabbendam

Short inspection of Harthill Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your school is a bright, warm and welcoming learning community. You are committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve success and any weaknesses in pupils' learning are addressed quickly so that pupils now make good progress. You have worked hard to introduce more consistent approaches to teaching and learning despite many changes to staff. A new leadership team has been introduced and you have prepared your team well to fulfil their new roles. Leaders have accurately identified the areas that need to improve and have put in place plans to ensure that appropriate actions are taken. As a result, pupils are now beginning to reap the reward of the changes you have made and outcomes are improving.

Pupils are polite and courteous as they move around the school. They support each other well in lessons and listen carefully to adults in classrooms. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and enjoy the lessons that teachers plan for them. During lesson time, the atmosphere is productive and focused. Pupils enjoy a broad curriculum that allows them to broaden their perspectives on the world around them.

The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children are happy and safe at school. The majority agree that their children make good progress and are well taught. You have established effective links with the local authority and other local schools which have enabled you to make positive changes. Provision in the early years has improved as a result of your actions and you have sustained good outcomes at the end of the early years

for several years. Similarly, outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check have been well above the national average in recent years.

During the last inspection, inspectors identified that achievement in writing was not as good as it was in reading and mathematics. By the end of Year 6 fewer pupils were reaching the higher levels of attainment than in other subjects. You have worked hard to make the improvements needed to increase the proportion of pupils reaching higher standards. Your analysis of assessments identified a need to improve pupils' vocabulary. In order to address this issue, you have provided teachers with new texts that promote the use of more demanding vocabulary. You have provided training to ensure that teachers have a better knowledge of the expectations of the national curriculum so that they can provide more challenging activities.

As a result of good leadership, outcomes in writing have improved. More pupils are reaching the expected and higher standards in each age group. Pupils are given a good range of opportunities to develop their writing skills and are making good progress. When we looked at books, we could see that most teachers plan activities that provide sufficient challenge for the most able and middle-prior-attaining pupils. Teachers make it clear what pupils must do to be successful in their writing and allow pupils time to check their work against these criteria. However, sometimes activities are not planned precisely enough to meet the needs of pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities. This means that they are unable to complete their tasks successfully and they make less progress.

The previous inspection found that teachers did not always plan and provide work that was hard enough for the most able pupils. Pupils' books now show that, in many cases, the most able pupils are given tasks that are appropriate for their age and provide them with challenge. Teachers' use of more challenging texts provides higher expectations and pupils are required to answer demanding questions to demonstrate their understanding. Our visits to lessons enabled us to listen to teachers use questioning skilfully to guide pupils. Sometimes, teachers encouraged pupils to make links to previous learning and this allowed them to improve the answers that they gave. However, pupils do not always take enough pride in their work. Too often, pupils make simple errors in their use of punctuation and grammar. Improving this is an important next step.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding requirements are fit for purpose. You and your staff team place a high priority on ensuring that pupils are safe and their welfare is protected. You make appropriate checks when recruiting staff to ensure that they are fit to work with pupils. You provide regular training for staff and all statutory training is up to date. Leaders provide staff with regular safeguarding updates so that they are kept aware of the latest guidance on dealing with national issues such as extremism. You distribute the responsibility for safeguarding appropriately among school leaders, so that the awareness of safeguarding remains high in school. Governors provide leaders with challenge and visit the school to check that procedures are adhered to.

Pupils are aware of who they can talk to should they have any concerns. You have planned opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe through lessons and assemblies. Pupils understand how to stay safe in different situations and have had a keen interest in ensuring that they promote road safety around the school. As a result of liaison with the local council, they have designed road safety signs that will be introduced to the area to warn motorists to drive carefully.

Inspection findings

- I wanted to find out how effectively leaders had taken steps to raise achievement in reading. Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 had been below the national average for the past two years. Leaders have supported teachers to improve the teaching of reading. The teaching of phonics is a strength and, in 2017, all pupils in Year 1 met the expectations of the phonics screening check. This provides a strong platform for pupils to be able to read more fluently and to develop an understanding of what they read. Leaders reviewed the approach that teachers used to teach reading comprehension. They have worked with staff to provide them with a greater range of activities that they can use to plan tasks for pupils. Teachers now ensure that tasks provide sufficient challenge for all groups of pupils.
- You have worked hard to promote reading in a range of ways. The new library is attractive and encourages pupils to want to grab a book and read. A range of initiatives have been used to promote reading. Pupils enjoyed the 'Extreme Reading' challenge, where they were challenged to take a picture of themselves reading in an unusual place. Leaders have carefully selected a range of high-quality texts that pupils have the opportunity to read each year. This has allowed pupils to read texts they would not usually have accessed. The questions you provide for parents help them to ask their children searching questions when they listen to them read at home. As a result of your work, pupils are now making good progress in reading overall. More pupils are now reaching the expected and higher standards in each year group.
- Published data showed that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities did not make good progress across key stage 2 in 2017. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities was higher than the national average and represented a significant proportion of pupils. I wanted to check how effectively leaders support these pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) has a good understanding of the needs of these pupils. She has worked closely with a representative from the local authority to ensure that the specific needs of these pupils are accurately identified. The SENCo has detailed plans in place to help support these pupils and makes regular checks on their progress. Plans are reviewed regularly to adjust the support that these pupils receive.
- The SENCo provides support and advice for teachers and they now have a better awareness of how to identify pupils' needs. Systems have been introduced to ensure that this happens as early as possible so that teachers can provide support quickly. Despite the good work of the SENCo, the progress that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities remains variable. When we watched lessons and looked in books, we found that teachers do not always plan lessons well enough to meet the

needs of these pupils. This means that the work that they complete is not always suitable for these pupils. As a result, the progress that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make is sometimes not as good as it could be.

- The previous inspection report identified that not enough disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standards by the end of key stage 1. This had not improved in 2017 and outcomes were similar for a small number of disadvantaged pupils. You have reviewed your use of the pupil premium funding and identified the main barriers to learning for your disadvantaged pupils. You have considered current research and put in place plans to support these pupils based upon this information. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is checked regularly and leaders discuss the support they receive with teachers. The vast majority of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 now meet the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Although there have been real improvements in key stage 1, the progress that disadvantaged pupils make in key stage 2 is variable. Leaders have already identified that they need to check the impact of their plans more carefully. A review of how the pupil premium funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils has been planned.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils take a pride in their work and use spelling, punctuation and grammar more accurately to improve their writing
- teachers plan activities carefully to meet the needs of pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities so that they make good progress
- the pupil premium funding is used more effectively to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Jaimie Holbrook
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met you and other senior leaders and shared my lines of enquiry. I also met with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, the subject leader for English, the SENCo and the designated safeguarding leader. I considered the responses of 23 parents from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 22 free-text comments. We visited classes together in key

stage 2. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluations of the school's current performance and its plans for further improvement. I considered a number of policy document, including those for safeguarding. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information.