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Mr James Garden
Headteacher
Cross Gates Primary School
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Dear Mr Garden

Short inspection of Cross Gates Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 November 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment at the start of this term, you have quickly got to grips with what needs to be done and have accurately identified areas for improvement. You have enabled subject leaders to share the responsibility of moving the school forward, recognising the strengths within your leadership team. You have swiftly addressed the need to hold all staff to account for improving standards. This is reflected in your use of performance management and the implementation of a comprehensive monitoring schedule and supported with a training programme to further improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics. You have utilised the school's assessment system to ensure that staff regularly record pupils' progress to provide an effective system to measure pupils' progress and to inform pupil progress meetings.

You have successfully retained the good morale of staff during the transition to your headship. The 15 staff who completed the inspection survey all agreed that the school is well led and managed and that they feel respected and valued. Parents who provided written comments spoke positively about your appointment and changes you are making to improve the school. 'The school is child centred and has a family feel,' said one parent. Pupils I spoke to struggled to think of anything that they felt could be better except to 'provide better football goal posts'.

During our learning walk together, we observed well-motivated pupils, attentive in lessons and focused on their work. There are good relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils are confident that the school's behaviour policy is used fairly and talked informatively about the consequences of any bad behaviour.

Following the previous inspection, the school was tasked with improving pupils' achievement in writing. Across the school, pupils, including the most able, are now making good progress in writing. The good teaching of phonics has been effectively maintained and pupils achieve well in reading. However, in mathematics current pupils are not making consistently good progress. The quality of the teaching of mathematics is variable across the school. You agree that addressing this is an important next step for the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school provides a safe environment for its pupils. Pupils understand how to stay safe in different situations, including on the internet. They have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and the procedures for dealing with it.

Leaders have created a safe culture to take care of pupils and ensure that procedures are implemented to protect them. Staff and governors understand their obligations for safeguarding and take appropriate action when necessary. They liaise with outside agencies and this provides pupils and families with the support they need. You are currently reviewing all the procedures and policies to ensure that they are fully fit for purpose and have instigated a safeguarding audit to be completed this month. All members of staff are checked for their suitability to work with children and you are updating training where it is required.

There are systems in place to follow up pupils' absences on the first day. Where necessary, you involve external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe when not in school. You are working hard to reduce the number of persistent absences and ensure that pupils attend school regularly. While rates of attendance are broadly average, there are still a very small number of pupils whose attendance is not good enough. Some families take holidays during term time and this is impacting negatively on the achievement of these pupils.

Inspection findings

- Pupils' progress in writing has improved. Pupils' workbooks show that they acquire and hone their basic writing skills effectively. Pupils are taught vocabulary they would not usually use in their spoken language. This enables them to write using a lively style. Pupils' books are well presented and handwriting is legible. Pupils in key stage 1 soon develop a cursive script. The most able pupils show an insightful understanding of how to improve their writing using techniques they have been taught in lessons. Teachers' feedback is effective in supporting pupils with their self-editing skills so they further improve their written work.
- Pupils are also making good progress in reading. Younger pupils gain a solid foundation in learning their letter sounds so they acquire early reading skills. By the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment is in line with the national average. This good start is reflected in pupils of all ages sharing their enjoyment of reading and confidently expressing their choice of books. By the end of key stage 2, all pupils, including the most able, make good progress.
- Provisional outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 indicate that achievement in

mathematics has continued to decline and that pupils have not made good progress from their starting points. There is a gap between girls' and boys' achievement, with boys outperforming girls. During the inspection, we discussed the school's approach to the teaching of mathematics. You and your leaders have already identified that some pupils are coming up through the school with gaps in their knowledge and understanding. To help to address this, the school is now embracing a 'maths mastery' approach to help to deepen pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts more effectively.

- Even so, the quality of teaching of mathematics is inconsistent across the school. At the start of key stage 1, pupils show enthusiasm for mathematics. They are confident and competent in using practical resources. This provides pupils with good strategies to work out basic calculations independently. However, this good start is not effectively built on as pupils move up through the year groups. Teachers do not consistently and/or accurately use key mathematical vocabulary and terms. The most able pupils do not make good progress because activities lack sufficient challenge. Sometimes, these pupils spend too much time repeating work they can already do. Pupils' misconceptions are not always identified quickly enough and, therefore, are not addressed effectively to move pupils' learning forward at a good rate. Opportunities for pupils to solve problems are also sometimes overlooked. Addressing these key aspects are important next steps for the school.
- New governors have recently been appointed and bring to the school a high level of expertise and skills. They are well placed to support you in your new headship as well as to hold you, and the leadership team, to account. They are knowledgeable and have a good understanding of how the school's performance compares to that of others. They articulate with clarity the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching in mathematics is improved so that pupils make consistently good progress, by:
 - making sure that teachers consistently use key mathematical vocabulary and terms
 - responding more quickly to identify and address pupils' misconceptions and move learning on
 - using assessment to plan activities which challenge the most able pupils
 - closing the gap between girls' and boys' achievement
 - providing pupils with strategies and resources to calculate accurately and solve problems
- the number of persistent absences is reduced.

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

Yours sincerely

Karen Heath
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your subject leaders for mathematics and writing to discuss aspects of the school's work. You shared your own evaluation of the effectiveness of the school and your improvement plans. Together, we observed several lessons, including writing and mathematics. With subject leaders, I looked at pupils' mathematics and writing books.

I reviewed a range of documents, including those relating to the safety and welfare of pupils. I spoke to pupils about behaviour, safety and their enjoyment of school. There were no responses to the online pupil survey. I listened to some pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6 read and discussed their enjoyment, and experience, of reading. I observed the provision in the school's breakfast club. I considered written comments from parents but there were too few responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, to evaluate their views.

I met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors as well as speaking to a representative from the local authority. I considered the views of the 15 staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey.