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Mrs Claire Hughes
Headteacher
Barlby Bridge Community Primary School
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Dear Mrs Hughes

Short inspection of Barlby Bridge Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 March 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, you have been a determined headteacher, leading a competent team who trust your decisions. You have forged a strong working relationship with your deputy headteacher, who since September has been given co-headteacher responsibilities one day per week. This arrangement works well because you both have an accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to improve it further.

One of the strengths of the school is the ethos based on teamwork for staff, leaders and pupils. Staff all agreed that leaders have created a climate in which teachers are trusted to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for the pupils. They are all proud to work at the school and are keen to contribute to its continuing improvement.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly loyal to the school. They value the school's strong partnership with them as well as the approachability of the school leaders. Parents praise the good communication, strong relationships and the extra-curricular experiences, for example residential visits, learning outdoors and after-school clubs. They also recognise the effective support that is given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One parent praised the strong emphasis that the school places on developing kindness, bravery and resilience,

stating: 'The school strikes a balance between focusing on pupils' academic success and on their personal development.'

Pupils are polite and confident and they are respectful of each other, staff and visitors. Groups such as the equalities team, eco-warriors and road safety team allow pupils a range of opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and the local community. For example, the equalities team carried out an experiment to see how accessible the school was to wheelchair users and then provided suggestions for improvements to the headteacher. Pupils and staff talk with pride about how older pupils in Year 6 take their buddy role seriously when they support children in Reception when they join the school. Pupils say that they enjoy school and are keen to share and talk about their work. Most-able pupils and those working at the expected standard relish the challenging work that they are given within lessons and this is increasing the proportion of pupils who are working at greater depth. However, the work is not always matched appropriately to the needs of the low prior-attaining pupils or those who are disadvantaged, therefore they do not make the same rapid progress, particularly in key stage 1.

At the time of the last inspection, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. This was quickly rectified and for the past two years the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics overall by the end of key stage 2 has been above the national average.

You have focused your work on addressing the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. Inspectors asked you to improve pupils' progress in mathematics and writing. Together with the mathematics and English leaders, you have focused on setting up effective arrangements for leaders to check and to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, by the end of key stage 2, pupils are now making stronger progress in writing and mathematics compared to the national average.

The school was also asked to improve pupils' attainment in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils demonstrate some competent skills in their writing books and the school's own internal assessments show that this is improving.

Governance is effective. Governors are committed to their roles and recognise their legal responsibilities. They are proud of the strong leadership appointments that they have made and recognise the impact that senior leaders have had on school improvement. Governors regularly visit school to evaluate the strengths and progress made towards addressing the weaknesses.

Safeguarding is effective.

You share the responsibility for safeguarding with the deputy headteacher and as a team, you have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are checked thoroughly to make sure that they are eligible to work with children. You have an effective induction to safeguarding and staff receive regular

training and updates. Due to the strong culture of safeguarding that you have established in the school, staff are vigilant, and they report all concerns raised about pupils immediately. Leaders are quick to act on those concerns. As a result, pupils at risk are identified quickly so that pupils and families can receive the support that they require from school, local authority and external agencies. All record-keeping is organised and detailed.

Pupils are taught about risks and how to keep safe at school and in their daily life. For example, pupils could talk confidently about road safety, personal safety and being vigilant when online. Pupils told me that they feel safe and that they are listened to by adults. They say that behaviour has improved, and bullying is not a problem at their school because pupils work and play well together. Pupils can name several adults that they would turn to for help if needed. One pupil told me 'Everyone is welcomed and valued here, but if anyone was unkind the teachers would deal with it immediately.'

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the care and support their children receive. They appreciate all that the school does to keep their children safe. One parent commented: 'My child is well cared for, nurtured and supported to deal with his own challenges but also to recognise his own strengths.'

Inspection findings

- The progress pupils make in writing is strong throughout the school. All teachers adopt a consistent approach to the teaching of writing. In mathematics, pupils develop confidence in using their skills to solve problems and reason. Additional sessions to support pupils of all abilities have accelerated the progress that pupils make in mathematics. However, the progress that pupils make in reading across the school is not as strong as it is in writing and mathematics. Therefore, on this inspection, I was interested to see what action has been taken by leaders, and how effective it has been, to improve pupils' progress in reading.
- Leaders aim to promote a love of reading by placing a strong focus on reading activities. Pupils can read in the recently refurbished library or in the outdoor classroom at playtime. Pupils can recall a range of books and stories that have been read to them or that they have read. They show an interest and enthusiasm for reading and are motivated by the rewards system that encourages them to read every night at home. Even so, inspection evidence, including from your school information of current pupils' rates of progress, indicates that progress in reading across the school, while improving, is still not as strong as it is in writing and mathematics.
- I spent time considering the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of phonics. Children in Reception make a good start to learning their letters and sounds because of the systematic approach to phonics and dedicated teaching time. At the time of the previous inspection, a below-average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. Your decision to change the way that phonics is taught has led to stronger rates of progress. As a result, outcomes in phonics by the end of Year 1 over the last five years have been on a rising trend and are now at least broadly in line

with the national average.

- Disadvantaged pupils and those whose starting points are low do not do as well as other pupils in learning to read. The books pupils who are in the early stages of reading use to practise their reading, including at home, sometimes have words that they are unable to sound out. This is slowing down the rate at which pupils gain confidence and learn to read with fluency and accuracy. We agreed that disadvantaged pupils and those who have low starting points need to improve their reading skills so that a higher proportion reach at least the expected standard by the end of both key stages 1 and 2.
- I also considered how well the disadvantaged pupils are learning across the various subjects overall. Together we spent time in classrooms talking to pupils and looking at their work. You agreed that although some disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress, there are a few who still are not catching up to their peers quickly enough, especially in key stage 1. Teaching is sometimes not well matched to their needs. Your governors are aware that this is an area of priority.
- Finally, I looked at what leaders are doing to make sure that pupils attend school each day. You track the attendance rates of pupils regularly and take a firm view against parents taking their children on holidays during term time. You work closely with parents of vulnerable pupils to support and encourage them to bring their children to school regularly and on time. Some improvements are evident. For example, the number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced considerably over the past 15 months. However, the overall attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils have been below average for four years. There are also too many disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent from school. You and your governors recognise the importance of continuing to work with individual families to improve this.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils in the early stages of reading have books that are matched to their phonics knowledge, so they can read all the words accurately to build their confidence, so they become more fluent with their reading
- teaching supports disadvantaged pupils and those with low prior attainment who need to catch up to do so as quickly as possible
- attendance, especially of disadvantaged pupils and those who are persistently absent, improves more rapidly to be at least in line with the national average.

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

Alison Aitchison
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, staff and governors. I also met with your local authority school improvement adviser. I spoke to a range of pupils and parents and I listened to pupils read. I visited classrooms with you and your deputy headteacher. I spoke with pupils in lessons, looked at pupils' learning and examined the work in their books. I examined and evaluated a range of documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, assessment and leaders' own evaluation of how well the school is doing. I spoke to parents at the end of the school day and considered the 47 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, along with the information sent in writing to me. I also took into account the views of the 18 staff and the 46 pupils who completed surveys.