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Mrs Lisa Hillyer
Head of Academy
Crookesbroom Primary Academy
Crookesbroom Lane
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Dear Mrs Hillyer

Short inspection of Crookesbroom Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 5 March 2019, 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 January 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You and your team are determined to provide a school where all pupils can be successful. You have created a very strong culture of collective responsibility, where every member of the school community has an important part to play in realising this ambition. You and your team are united in your quest to identify barriers to learning and to provide the support needed to ensure that every pupil can reach their potential.

Your self-evaluation is extremely thorough and accurate. Year on year, you have identified priorities for improvement and have put highly effective plans in place to address them. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics increases as pupils move through key stages 1 and 2. In 2018, at the end of Year 6, this proportion was above the national average in all three subjects.

Following the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching and learning, especially for the most able pupils. In mathematics, a short diagnostic

test is used at the beginning of each lesson. This enables teachers to pitch their teaching, and the tasks they set pupils, to provide exactly the right level of challenge. This structure gives all pupils opportunities to develop skills in fluency, problem solving and reasoning.

Leaders were also asked to strengthen the challenge in writing. Pupils of all ages now have many opportunities to write at length. They do this for a wide range of purposes, in a variety of different topics. Work in pupils' books shows that this strategy has been effective in improving many aspects of writing, including the effect that the use of different sentence structures and vocabulary has on the reader.

The final area for improvement was to develop the resources for learning in the early years outdoor area. At most times of the day, children now have the freedom to choose to work and play, indoors or outdoors. There are many choices of activities which encourage all children to access all areas of learning and to explore the environment more fully. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2018 was above the national average.

Governors know the school extremely well and can list the many strengths of the school. They can understand the plans that leaders have put in place to make further improvements. In addition, they can explain how they monitor their effect on pupils' progress. They are particularly vigilant in tracking the use of pupil premium funding to make sure that it has maximum impact on those it is designed to support.

Pupils say that they are encouraged to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally well. They say that they are happy and enjoy learning at this school. They value the opportunities the school provides to take part in sporting and musical activities. They enjoy being able to apply to take on extra responsibilities, such as working in the library or at lunchtime to support staff and other pupils.

Parents and carers value the work that the school does to support pupils academically, socially and emotionally. Many parents praised the school for the work that it does to get to know pupils as individuals and for the bespoke support it provides.

Staff say that they are proud to be part of this school. They value the opportunities they have for professional development and the support and challenge that leaders provide. They enjoy working in a climate where staff are trusted to take risks and to innovate in ways that are right for the pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have made sure that all policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Staff are well trained and receive regular updates. They are fully aware that safeguarding

is everyone's responsibility. They report all concerns with urgency, no matter how small. Record keeping is thorough, and where necessary, actions are taken in a timely manner. This ensures that there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school.

Pupils say that their school does not have bullies. They are confident that there are adults in school who will support them if they have any concerns. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a range of different situations, including when using the internet, in the event of a house fire and when near the local canal. They contributed to risk assessments for a trip to London. They can speak with confidence about work they have done to reduce the risk of exploitation.

Parents say that their children feel happy and safe in school and that the school responds well to any issues that they raise. They have no concerns about bullying. One parent said, 'It gives me great peace of mind to know that my children are so well cared for at this school.' All the parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that they would recommend the school to other parents.

Inspection findings

- Phonics teaching is effective in equipping pupils with the skills they need to be able to succeed in the early stages of learning to read and write. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to practise and apply these skills throughout each day, in a range of different situations. Books are well matched to pupils' phonic ability. Carefully tailored support is given to pupils who are falling behind their peers to help them to catch up. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics in Year 1 is around the national average. Very few pupils fail to reach the expected standard by the end of Year 2.
- The well-resourced library contributes to pupils' love of reading. Pupils say that they appreciate being able to borrow books to enjoy reading at home. Many spoke with enthusiasm about stories that they have read and about their favourite authors. This, together with effective teaching, resulted in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher standards in reading being above the national averages in Year 6.
- Daily work to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of vocabulary is supporting the development of reading and writing skills. However, this work needs to be extended to help pupils to understand more words and phrases, especially when they are used in different contexts.
- Leaders are taking effective action to support disadvantaged pupils. The school focuses on identifying and addressing any barriers to learning that these pupils may have. Their work to support pupils' social and emotional needs is extremely effective. Everyone in school has very high expectations for these pupils and makes sure that they can access learning alongside their peers. As a result, by the end of key stage 2, their attainment is in line with the national average.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are given well-designed, bespoke support. Staff are well trained to meet their needs. Work in

books and school data show that these pupils are making good progress.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils have opportunities to study a wide range of subjects and are supported to make meaningful links between areas of learning. The curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors which give pupils valuable first-hand experiences. Topic work provides lots of opportunities to practise and apply English and mathematical skills in a range of different contexts. The curriculum is designed to help pupils to extend their knowledge of different subjects, but does not ensure that they build on subject-specific skills and understanding from year to year.
- The school uses a range of effective strategies to improve attendance. As a result, current attendance for all pupils this academic year is in line with the national average for the previous year. Attendance of disadvantaged pupils has dramatically improved and is currently above the national average for the group for the previous year. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has also reduced. However, some families still take holidays during term time, resulting in poor attendance for their children.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the curriculum is further developed to ensure that pupils deepen their skills and understanding in subjects other than English and mathematics
- teaching continues to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of vocabulary
- attendance continues to improve.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Doncaster. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Cook
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I made visits to all classes with you. I looked at work in pupils' books with middle leaders. I met with two governors and a representative from the trust.

I talked with several parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day and took account of the 25 responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

I talked informally with pupils in lessons, met formally with a group of pupils, and took account of the 38 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey. I also met with a group of staff and took account of the 14 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.

I scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, school assessment information, and attendance and safeguarding documentation.