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15 May 2019

Mr J Taylor
Interim Executive Principal
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Dear Mr Taylor

Short inspection of Coppice Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 1 May 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 April 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. At Coppice Primary Academy, there is a positive, aspirational and inclusive culture based around the school motto of 'learn and grow together'. Leaders have created a collaborative and professional ethos where teachers, teaching assistants and pupils are keen to learn from each other. As a result, teachers' subject knowledge is developing well and the progress that pupils are making is improving.

Standards have risen in key stage 2 over the last two years. The progress that pupils make is strong in reading and mathematics. In 2018, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average.

The school is a harmonious and happy place to be. The classrooms are bright, welcoming and stimulating. Across the school, attractive wall displays celebrate many examples of pupils' learning, particularly their writing. Pupils that I spoke with were keen to tell me that the school is very popular in the local community. This is evident in the number of applications the school receives for places every year. As one pupil stated, 'everyone wants to come to Coppice Primary'.

Pupils behave well in class and around school. They are polite, well mannered and a credit to their families. Across the school, it was clear that pupils want to learn and that they value the education that they receive. Pupils enjoy coming to school and

are proud to be part of the school community.

You have responded effectively to most of the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. Leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teaching assistants were deployed effectively. You have provided professional development for teaching assistants to improve their subject knowledge and equip them with the strategies they need to support pupils in their learning. Consequently, teaching assistants are now highly effective in supporting pupils across the school.

You were also asked to improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that the work set is challenging enough so that pupils can reach the highest possible standard, particularly in mathematics. There have been many improvements to the quality of teaching across the school. Leaders have supported teachers and provided bespoke training to improve their subject knowledge. There has also been considerable investment in resources, particularly in mathematics. Consequently, achievement across the school has been rising over the last two years.

Actions that leaders have taken have been most successful in key stage 2, where pupils make strong progress. In 2018, a greater proportion of pupils achieved at the higher standard in reading and mathematics in Year 6. However, the progress that pupils make in their writing in key stage 2 and mathematics in key stage 1 is not as strong.

Finally, the previous inspection report stated that there was a need to improve the attendance of pupils at school. Because this was still below the national average, attendance continued to be an area that was reviewed as part of the current inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. This aspect of the school's work is very well led and there is a strong culture for keeping children safe throughout the school. Leaders have made sure that staff receive comprehensive training and are kept up to date about safeguarding matters. Leaders and staff have a comprehensive understanding of their responsibilities. For example, where there are specific concerns regarding pupils' welfare, leaders are tenacious in their actions when working with external agencies. There are comprehensive procedures in place for the recruitment and selection of staff. No new member of staff is allowed to start work at the school until all relevant checks have been completed. The school site is safe and secure, and visitors' credentials are checked closely.

Pupils I spoke to said that they feel safe in school. They were keen to tell me that they value the relationships that they have with the staff. If they have any concerns they can use the 'class worry box'. Staff regularly check these boxes and help pupils to resolve any problems swiftly. Consequently, pupils told me that bullying did not happen. The curriculum ensures that there are many opportunities for pupils to

learn about staying safe, for example when using the internet or working online.

Inspection findings

- As part of this inspection, I focused on several lines of enquiry. The first was to see whether attendance had improved for all pupils. I also looked at whether persistent absenteeism had reduced. The attendance of all groups of pupils is monitored. Staff intervene swiftly when required, to support pupils and families whose attendance is a concern. Leaders work closely in partnership with external agencies and the school's attendance officer to provide help and support for families if their child's attendance becomes a concern. As a last resort, you fine parents when necessary. Individual case studies show that, as a result of your actions, the attendance of some pupils has improved dramatically. Consequently, attendance across the school is good and persistent absence is in line with the national average.
- The next area we looked at was the progress pupils are making in their phonics skills in Year 1. This is because the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been slightly below the national average for the last two years. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics across the early years and key stage 1. Leaders ensure that teaching groups are well organised, and that additional support is given where it is most needed. High-quality training enables staff to deepen their subject knowledge and confidence in teaching phonics. Pupils are now using phonics successfully to support the development of their reading and writing. As a result, pupils' progress in phonics is strong.
- Another area that I inspected was the progress that pupils were making in mathematics in key stage 1. Over the last two years, pupils' attainment in mathematics has been in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. You have identified this as an area for improvement. The mathematics leader has supported teachers and provided bespoke training to improve the quality of teaching. Consequently, teachers' subject knowledge is improving. Work in pupils' books shows that lessons are planned to match most pupils' needs. As a result of these changes, current school assessment information shows that pupils are making stronger gains in their learning. However, the most able pupils are not consistently challenged to achieve to their best in mathematics.
- Finally, I considered the progress that the most able pupils are making in their writing in key stage 2. This was because, in 2018, fewer pupils at the end of Year 6 achieved the higher standard, compared to reading and mathematics. Leaders have prioritised writing in the school's improvement plan. The barriers that were preventing pupils from achieving at the highest standard have been identified. The focus on developing pupils' vocabulary has led to an improvement in pupils' writing. This was evident in the good-quality writing displayed around the school.
- In addition, teachers use a whole-class text as a stimulus for writing. Pupils enjoy this approach and take great pride in their written work. This was exemplified in pupils' writing in response to the text 'The Egyptian Cinderella', by Shirley Climo. Pupils' writing was of a high standard. Phrases such as 'tiny rosebud mouth' and

'shiny black hair that fell in a sheet down her back and fanned across her shoulders' demonstrate how pupils have many opportunities to develop and deepen their vocabulary. Work in pupils' books showed that they have many opportunities to edit and improve their writing. However, on occasions teachers' expectations in writing, for the most able, were not consistently high.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is sufficient level of challenge in key stage 1 mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils
- strategies to strengthen key stage 2 pupils' progress in writing are further embedded so that the most able writers are consistently challenged.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Barlow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I observed teaching and learning and scrutinised examples of pupils' work. I met with you, the head of school and the chief executive officer for the trust. I met with senior leaders, middle leaders and the senior administrator. I spoke with pupils informally in lessons and around the school. I spoke with the chair of the governing body.

I took account of the five free-text responses from parents and carers. I took account of 27 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. I reviewed a range of school documents. These included: the school's self-evaluation; the school's development plans and assessment records; minutes of the governing body meetings; safeguarding documentation; and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. I considered information posted on the school's website.