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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Jane Turner
Headteacher
Pannal Primary School
Pannal Green
Pannal
Harrogate
North Yorkshire
HG3 1LH

Dear Mrs Turner

Short inspection of Pannal Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 June 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2014.

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.

As headteacher, you have successfully established an ethos and vision that is shared by all pupils and staff. Indeed, on more than one occasion, pupils eagerly described to me the characteristics and distinctiveness of what it means to be 'Pannal-shaped'. In this way, the school environment is calm and purposeful. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic learners. They are, as you want them to be, 'positive and thoughtful in their attitudes and actions'. Over time, no pupils have been permanently excluded or excluded for a fixed period. Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school is exemplary.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Consequently, rates of absence and persistent absence are considerably lower than the national average. To support pupils and their families in this regard, you have appointed a full-time school nurse and a parent support adviser. The parent support adviser engages with a large number of families and pupils to ensure that any barriers to learning are identified and steps taken to overcome them. Leaders have established excellent working relationships with a wide range of external agencies. In this way, if a pupil or their family require

additional professional support, leaders are able to make swift and appropriate referrals. This precautionary action ensures that pupils do not become school refusers and that rates of attendance remain high.

Provision in the early years is a significant strength of the school. Children get off to an excellent start in Reception. This is because the early years leader and staff develop excellent working relationships with children. Staff get to know children's likes and dislikes quickly, in addition to the aspects of learning that children find easy and more demanding. As a result, staff adapt activities to suit each child. Many activities include a focus on early reading, writing and mathematics. For example, when children play with building blocks, they are expected to consider their actions in advance by writing instructions or plans. On completion, children write a written description of what the final product looks like. The vibrant indoor and outdoor provision ensures that children have a wealth of opportunities to try something new, ask questions like 'why?' or 'how?' and develop their social skills further. Due to the high standard of teaching and strong leadership in the early years, an above average proportion of children leave Reception having reached a good level of development.

The school participates in a wide range of professional development activities, including giving and receiving support to and from other schools, as part of the Yorkshire Causeway Multi-academy trust. Training for teachers and other staff is highly effective in helping to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, would recommend the school to another parent. A minority of parents have concerns about the large class sizes and some say that they would like more frequent updates on how well their child is doing in school. However, the views of the large majority of parents were positive, with many echoing the comments of one parent, who said:

'Pannal Primary is a truly lovely school. There is a clear holistic approach to child development, which permeates through everything they do ('Pannal-Shaped'). Staff are committed and very skilled at developing a child's academic ability, whilst addressing and nurturing the needs of the whole child physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. My children are extremely happy at school. They are healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged - I couldn't ask for more.'

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders make appropriate checks to ensure that staff are safe to work with children. Furthermore, leaders ensure that child protection and/or safeguarding concerns are shared immediately with the local authority. Written records and safeguarding referrals are comprehensive. They include content derived from a range of interested parties and they are shared in a timely manner to ensure that

pupils in need of support receive it without delay.

The arrangements for staff development and training in relation to safeguarding are effective. Staff attend regular training and they are kept up to date with more recent advice by safeguarding leaders.

Leaders ensure that the school site is safe and that pupils are unable to access the surrounding play areas or woodlands without an adult present.

Pupils have a thorough understanding of how to stay safe. This stems from regular lessons and assemblies that focus on safeguarding issues such as fire safety, how to stay safe online and the risks pupils may face when they take part in Forest School or visits to the woodlands. Pupils say that they feel safe and that they are comfortable sharing a concern or worry with any adult in the school. Pupils have confidence that teachers and additional staff will deal with any issues swiftly and effectively should they arise.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry during this inspection focused on reading and whether or not leaders and staff ensure that early reading is a priority. Inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils love reading. They have a clear understanding of different genres and what, in their own opinion, makes a good book. For example, one pupil spoke with enthusiasm by saying that a good book was one that, 'makes my heart beat faster in places'. Over time, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who pass the phonics screening check has been broadly in line with the national average. For some cohorts, this represents modest gains following the strong start pupils make in the early years. Leaders know that some pupils are capable of more. To this end, they have invested recently in new reading books that more closely match pupils' phonics knowledge. Leaders and staff demonstrate a strong understanding about how pupils learn to read. They have ensured that the content of the phonics programme is appropriately structured and sequenced to support pupils' progress with reading. Teachers regularly assess the sound-letter correspondences that pupils know and provide intensive support for weaker readers so that they stay in touch with their learning. Leaders ensure that all staff are observed teaching phonics and that staff have regular opportunities to observe each other. There is a comprehensive plan to support all staff, including in key stage 2, to teach phonics and reading successfully. This ensures that staff have the necessary skills to be able to help pupils transfer their newly acquired phonics knowledge into their written work. Scrutiny of pupils' written work highlights that current pupils in the early years and key stage 1 are making strong progress over time. Notwithstanding this, pupils say that they would like more opportunities to listen to adults read and for adults to listen to them read more often.
- My second line of enquiry focused on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and whether or not teachers plan to meet the needs of all pupils from their different starting points. Observations of pupils' learning demonstrates that the quality of teaching is very strong. Teachers liaise effectively with highly

skilled teaching assistants. Teachers ensure that additional adults are deployed successfully and that they have a significant effect on the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the least able pupils. Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge, use learning time wisely and assess pupils accurately. Pupils respond to teachers' insightful assessment, ensuring that they do not repeat the same errors or hold the same misconceptions following teachers' assessments. The quality of pupils' creative writing is superb. Written work includes increasingly challenging vocabulary and a range of appropriate methods to engage the reader. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning complement teachers' high expectations. Pupils are keen to do their best and impress their teacher. In the same way, teachers regularly reward pupils for their impressive work by displaying examples of high-quality work on pupils' individual clipboards displayed around each classroom. Teachers have a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the pupils they teach. Consequently, the vast majority of lessons include activities that support and challenge pupils in equal measure. However, occasionally, some of the most able pupils find learning tasks too easy. While attainment for these pupils is very high, the progress made by the most able pupils is not as strong as it could be, because they are not sufficiently challenged all of the time.

- My third line of enquiry was in relation to the quality of leadership and management, particularly whether leaders and governors provide insightful and purposeful leadership. Leaders across the school are inspirational, determined and genuinely focused on what works best for each pupil. They are honest in their evaluations of the school's effectiveness. School improvement documentation is precise and areas that require further development are clearly assigned to staff for improvement. Leaders are outward-facing and continuously looking for new ideas or ways to improve the quality of education pupils receive. Subject leaders are given a significant amount of autonomy because they do their job well. Subject leaders are experienced, insightful and reflective of their own work and that of their team. Furthermore, governors are skilled and they possess a wide range of professional expertise that ensures they hold leaders to account for the effect of their work. Minutes from the meetings of the governing body demonstrate that they are curious and do not accept information readily. The school's effectiveness, particularly in relation to reading, is much improved now because of the strength and depth across the school's leadership teams.
- Although not a key line of enquiry, I found that pupils' personal development is extremely strong. A carefully planned curriculum plays a large part in helping pupils become successful learners, ready to take their next steps in education. A considerable amount of curriculum time, in addition to an array of after-school activities, is allocated to developing pupils' understanding, skills and knowledge relating to five distinctive 'dimensions': Active, arts, environment, enterprise and global. Pupils talk with animation about the opportunities that this approach affords them. For example, pupils utilise the adjoining woodlands to learn about the environment and sustainability, they experiment with or master their musical and creative skills by taking part in the popular school orchestra or dramatic plays and they learn what it means to be entrepreneurial when they fundraise for various charities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders, governors and the multi-academy trust should ensure that:

- teachers consistently plan challenging learning activities that meet the needs of the most able pupils
- leaders continue to improve pupils' early reading skills so that a greater proportion of pupils meet the required standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, 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

Lee Elliott
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I met with you and other members of the leadership team. Together, we visited classrooms to evaluate pupils' learning. I met with governors, the chief executive officer and a trustee of the trust, subject leaders and pupils. I spoke on the telephone with one provider of alternative education provision and in person with a number of parents prior to the start of the school day. I observed staff listening to pupils read and visited provision in the early years to speak with leaders and observe children's learning. Prior to the inspection, I analysed the school's website and evaluated a wide range of additional documentation. During the inspection, I evaluated safeguarding arrangements, including the record of suitability checks on staff, safeguarding policies and associated files, referrals and attendance records. I also scrutinised key stage 2 pupils' writing and mathematics books with subject leaders. I considered the 175 responses from parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Responses from the 44 members of staff and the 173 pupils to Ofsted's online staff and pupils' surveys were also taken into account.