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Mr Gareth Morgan  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Morgan

### **Short inspection of Cranham Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 18 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 October 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Cranham Primary School is a very positive and inclusive school community. Together, you and your team demonstrate a depth of understanding and many important skills in relation to the context of the school and the needs of your pupils.

Leaders at all levels display an energy and passion for the transformation they make to pupils' lives. Your determination to support pupils' physical, mental, social and emotional well-being as well as their academic achievements shines through. Parents and carers echo this, with comments such as 'Pleased with how the children have been nurtured yet grown into independent confident learners' and 'Children feel valued, successful and have a love of learning due to the way the teachers go above and beyond.'

Leaders support families in a range of ways. The role of the family liaison team is pivotal in developing and maintaining positive partnerships with families. Both staff and families value these relationships. Leaders pinpoint and implement appropriate help and support that improve pupils' life experiences. Pupils acquire the skills and resilience to cope with a range of situations. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary because expectations are high and routines are well established. Consequently, pupils thrive in school and make strong progress.

Leaders have sculpted 'Cranham's Cracking Curriculum' in a careful and coordinated way. Pupils develop and deepen their skills, knowledge and understanding over time across all subjects. Teachers have a strong rationale for their choice of books and texts, together with their approach to teaching each topic. This embodies the school's motto of 'Inspiring children for a lifetime of learning.' In addition, teachers identify a wow in, wow out and career opportunity within each topic. These carefully thought out aspects engage pupils' interests from the start, promote parental partnership and raise aspirations.

Further enrichment is seen through regular careers interviews with professionals, such as a midwife, a retired naval officer and an avionics technician. Parents recognise and appreciate the interesting curriculum offer, with a parent reflecting the views of many, saying, 'Teaching engages and excites the children, and often results in parents being invited into school to participate in shared child and parent activities.'

Staff morale is high. This was evident from my discussion with middle leaders and teachers. Most staff responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire agree that they are proud to be a member of staff at this school, enjoy working at the school and feel well supported. Middle leaders have many varied opportunities to visit schools within the Rivers CofE Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). This has strengthened their leadership practice. They are well placed to give, as well as receive, support.

Leaders promote a tailored approach to professional development appropriate to individuals' skill sets and experience. Regular training for all staff is in the process of embedding consistent practice that leaders have identified as strategies all must follow. However, training is also flexible enough to encourage staff to have the confidence to try new ways of doing things. This bespoke way of working continually centres on the question, 'What is right for our pupils at Cranham?' Teachers seek out expertise within school and across the MAT to develop and share effective practice. You also share skills and expertise with staff in the on-site Early Years Language Centre, especially around the development of early language acquisition. However, across the school, the impact of the newly introduced strategies on pupils' outcomes is just beginning to be seen.

You have responded well to the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The overall quality of the teaching of spelling has improved. Staff are reflective about their practice and are willing to learn from each other. They are committed to improvement and participate in projects and research about teaching and learning to further develop their practice. Leaders' monitoring at all levels is regular, sharply focused and cyclical and ensures continual improvement.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders continually and consistently prioritise safeguarding. Leaders are fully aware of the potential risks pupils and their families face in the community. They use this knowledge to keep pupils safe and to support their families. Several senior staff members have trained as designated safeguarding leads. This allows leaders to

quickly respond to any concerns raised, and ensures that information is passed to the right people in a timely manner.

There are well-defined and clear referral procedures so that all staff, students and volunteers are aware of whom to go to if they are concerned about a child's welfare or safety. Leaders work closely with external agencies, when necessary, to ensure that pupils are protected and families are supported. You escalate matters when you feel that external agencies are not taking your concerns seriously enough.

Pupils have complete confidence in the adults in the school. Pupils say, 'Adults solve problems well.' Pupils know a range of strategies that they can use to help themselves to stay calm and safe. They also rise to the increasing expectations as they get older. They recognise the difference between unkind behaviour and bullying. Pupils identify that peer mediators are there to help them if needed. Parents agree, with all who responded to the survey saying their child is safe and well looked after.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders are determined to overcome challenges, and you diligently pursue improvements wherever they are required. You have told staff clearly that they must identify individual pupils' strengths, gifts and needs to ensure their success and well-being. Adults' knowledge of individual pupils is a strength of the school and, consequently, pupils feel valued and are making strong progress in all subjects. However, despite good progress, current pupils have ground to catch up in their learning. Not enough pupils are yet meeting the standards expected of them for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have implemented a targeted and systematic approach to teaching phonics and spellings. This supports pupils to secure and apply spellings in writing in a purposeful way. Pupils' spelling is consistently improving, with spelling scores in 2018 at the end key stage 2 being higher than the national figures. Work in pupils' books clearly displays the continual focus on correct spellings across all subjects.
- Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. Teachers give pupils books which match the sounds they have been taught as they learn to read. This helps them to read accurately and with growing confidence and fluency. Pupils also take other books home which parents can share with their child. Leaders make sure that parents understand the different types of books that go home.
- Teachers' use of quality texts is a key factor in focusing on pupils' vocabulary acquisition and understanding throughout every year group. 'Read like a writer and write like a reader' is an often-repeated refrain that is evident across writing in English. All groups of pupils across all year groups are making good progress. Leaders' astute reflections bring about small changes that have a big impact. The 'one book' approach, where pupils record every subject within a topic in the same book, has raised presentation standards, deepened links across learning and helped pupils to know and remember more.
- Senior and middle leaders are clear on the building blocks required to allow all

pupils to mature into skilled and sophisticated writers by the time they leave Cranham Primary School. They have created a precise skills development pathway that builds layer upon layer. This results in pupils acquiring a wide vocabulary, understanding how to create grammatically accurate sentences and compose with purpose, control and imagination. Writing in books exemplifies the success of the approach taken to writing.

- Leaders have shaped the teaching of mathematics around four key principles – teach it, do it, twist it and deepen it. Teachers skilfully plan and sequence the teaching of mathematics across a session, and over a unit of work. Leaders maintain the mantra 'linger for longer'. This secures and deepens pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in a way that allows them to be successful problem solvers. All year groups of pupils make strong progress in mathematics. End of key stage outcomes in mathematics are improving for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. End of key stage 2 progress has been significantly above the national average and in the top 20% for at least two years. As with English, though, some pupils are making up for slower progress in the past and not enough are yet meeting standards expected of them for their age.
- Attendance hovers around national figures while persistent absence has been well above the national average but is reducing. However, there is the potential to further reduce rates of persistent absence, thus improving attendance overall.
- Leaders use the pupil premium and funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) constructively to meet targeted pupils' many different needs. Currently, leaders deploy skilled teachers to deliver a personalised curriculum to small groups of pupils. This provision is meeting their social and emotional needs alongside their academic needs. Leaders' careful consideration to maintain these pupils' relationships with their peers ensures that they are fully involved in all school activities. Work in pupils' books shows they are making progress. However, although progress is good, current pupils are not yet quite reaching the standards of which they are capable.
- Most children enter the early years with skills and knowledge well below those typical for their age, especially in speaking. Leaders' focus on improving the indoor and outdoor environment to support and promote language development from the very start of Nursery is providing positive results. By the time they leave the Reception Year, all children have made strong progress in all areas of learning. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2018 was a significant improvement on the previous year. However, it remains well below the national average.
- In the early years, adults support children to settle quickly and develop positive attitudes to learning. There is a strong focus on communication and language in the Nursery and Reception classes which supports the progress of all children. Adults plan a range of activities built around a text to provide opportunities across all areas of the curriculum. On a walk-through during the inspection, children were choosing what to have for a snack and when to have a snack independently; a child was also taking their washing-up duties very seriously. Children cooperate well together, talk to visitors and develop independence.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they further reduce the amount of persistent absence
- they continue to embed effective teaching strategies so that all pupils across all key stages, including the disadvantaged and pupils with SEND, continue to make strong progress and achieve the standards of which they are capable.

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

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Foulkes  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the senior leadership team, the administrator and middle leaders and a group of governors. I met with the chief executive officer and held a telephone conversation with the chair of the school improvement board. I observed pupils around the school and in their classes. I undertook joint learning walks with middle leaders and looked at books. I also met with six pupils to seek their views of the school. I met parents at the start of the school day. I took account of the 27 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including 26 free-text responses, and the 35 responses to the staff survey. I reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the single central record, the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plan, several school policy documents and the procedures for keeping pupils safe. I also checked the school's website.