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Mrs Claire Allen
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Allen

Short inspection of Fixby Junior and Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 9 July 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.

The school is a lively and welcoming place to be. You and your staff have created an environment where pupils are encouraged to interact with each other and with teachers and staff so that they get the most out of their learning experience. Parents, carers, staff and pupils speak highly of the school. Pupils speak positively about a school which is caring and how pupils look after each other.

You have dealt with the recommendations made at the time of the previous inspection of your school. Teachers ensure that they plan activities and tasks which consider the prior learning of pupils. Pupils, including children in the early years, complete challenging work. They do so independently and with enthusiasm.

Teachers set high expectations in all classrooms. In all lessons observed and all books scrutinised, the quality of pupils' work was of a high standard. Teachers provide pupils with learning intentions which identify the criteria required for pupils to successfully deepen and extend their learning. Pupils told me that they find their work challenging and that teachers support them in their learning by providing them with the help and guidance they need to complete their work successfully. Teaching assistants are used skilfully by teachers to support the learning of those pupils who require additional guidance. School leaders have worked closely with improvement partners and national leaders of education to make improvements and establish an

accurate view of the strengths and areas where more development is required in the school. Leaders' evaluations closely agree with my findings from this inspection.

In the lessons I observed, pupils were lively and engaged in the activities and tasks teachers had planned for them. Pupils were keen to interact with teachers and other pupils to develop their learning. Pupils' workbooks I scrutinised were well presented, with no examples of untidy or careless work. Pupils told me that they appreciated the support they get from teachers to help them with their work. They said that the school is welcoming of everyone and that they support each other during lessons and during social times too. Pupils talk confidently and proudly about their school. It is clear pupils are very happy that they are members of your school community.

In 2018, attainment at the end of key stage 2 improved and was broadly average. However, although pupils' progress in mathematics was average, pupils' progress in reading and writing was below average. You have responded by ensuring that reading is a core element of your curriculum across all year groups. You have introduced the 'power of reading' approach and daily guided-reading sessions, which challenge pupils to develop a love of reading and to develop their skills in reading for purpose. You and your staff work effectively with parents and carers to engage their help to support their children's reading. You have also responded to the challenge of improving pupils' writing. Pupils' books in a wide range of subjects evidence opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills through extended writing tasks. The school's achievement information, my scrutiny of pupils' workbooks and listening to pupils reading showed me that, overall, current pupils are making good progress in their reading and writing. Unvalidated information which you have recently received for 2019 indicates that both attainment and pupils' progress in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 have improved when compared to the information for 2018.

In 2018 the proportion of children in the early years achieving a good level of development fell and was below the national average. You have responded by strengthening the quality of leadership in this area. Through this, early years activities are now routinely planned with a firm focus on developing the skills of children towards meeting their early learning goals. During the inspection, I observed this first-hand. Children are making good progress in early years. Unvalidated information which you have recently received for 2019 indicates that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has improved significantly compared to 2018.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders and governors fulfil their legal safeguarding duties. The culture of safeguarding in the school is a strong feature. Staff and governors are trained regularly and all pupils are well supported. Policies and procedures are fit for purpose and day-to-day routines are secure. Records, including the single central record of checks on adults' suitability to work and volunteer at the school, are appropriately maintained. You and leaders work successfully and extensively with local agencies to be sure that the needs of pupils and their families are addressed

effectively.

Pupils say that behaviour is generally good around the school and that they feel safe. They say that bullying is very rare, but if it were to happen, teachers and staff will help to resolve the problems. They have great faith that any adult in the school will listen to them and act on any worries that they may have.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we agreed that we would focus on: how well leaders ensure that pupils' reading improves; how well teaching ensures that pupils make stronger progress in writing; how leaders ensure that children in the early years are developed towards meeting their early learning goals; how leaders ensure that assessments of pupils' progress in key stage 1 are accurate; and how leaders are taking action to reduce exclusions.
- Published performance information for the end of key stage 2 in 2018 indicates that pupils did not make good progress in reading. You have embedded a culture whereby pupils, parents and carers are beginning to value reading for pleasure and for purpose. Your staff and governors wholeheartedly support you in this approach. During my visits to lessons I observed pupils engaged in guided reading and activities which developed their reading and comprehension skills. It was clear from listening to pupils read that they are reading books which are accessible to them but are challenging too. Pupils use their phonics skills to sound out and blend sounds so that they can decode words successfully. The perseverance of pupils was particularly impressive to observe. Pupils are developing the confidence to attempt books which stretch and develop their reading skills. Consequently, current pupils are making good progress in their reading. Leaders and teachers speak enthusiastically about the 'power of reading' approach to reading in school and at home. You acknowledge that embedding a stronger culture of reading remains a challenge in your school and that although many parents and carers are supporting their children in their reading, there remains more work to do to embed this culture further.
- Published performance information for the end of key stage 2 in 2018 indicates that pupils did not make good progress in writing. You have intelligently linked the development of writing in your school to reading and comprehension. Pupils are tasked through the 'power of reading' to analyse texts, retrieve information from them and write at length about their understanding of meaning, characters and storylines. Consequently, the development of pupils' writing skills is embedded in practice across the school. During my visits to lessons and through looking at pupils' books, I observed pupils' work as being of high quality. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the books and texts they were using in their lessons. Pupils are being exposed to a wide range of books and teachers are providing pupils with challenging books and tasks which consider pupils' prior learning and current progress. Consequently, current pupils are making good progress in their writing, but you agree that these improvements need to continue.
- Published information in 2018 indicated that the proportion of children in the early years achieving a good level of development fell and was lower than the

national average. Since the beginning of the current academic year, you have strengthened early years leadership. The effect of this new leadership is evident in the activities which the children are exposed to. These activities are planned and purposeful. Teachers skilfully develop children's language, physical coordination and understanding of shape and number through supervised and active play, for example. In the sessions I observed, children were keen to talk about their activities and to work alongside other children and teachers with confidence. Children in the early years, through this structured approach, are making good progress towards achieving good levels of development.

- I was interested to hear how you and leaders have ensured that your assessments of pupils' progress in key stage 1 are accurate and reliable. You have established an assessment approach which ensures that pupils who are falling behind others are quickly identified. In mathematics, a same-day intervention approach has had a positive effect on pupils' progress. Leaders and teachers work closely with governors to scrutinise assessment information, identifying those pupils who require extra support to improve their reading and writing. This work allows governors to effectively hold leaders to account for the improvements which the school may require. You have not been complacent either, you have embraced the support offered to the school from the local authority, including external moderation of your internal assessments of pupils' progress in early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Leaders are determined to encourage the very small minority of pupils who do not always behave as they should to improve their behaviour. Leaders have identified these pupils and have taken the appropriate actions to encourage them to more positively engage in their learning. Leaders communicate extensively with parents and carers and encourage them to support the school in changing any negative behaviour patterns their children are exhibiting. School information confirms the effect of these actions, and that exclusions have reduced significantly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- attainment and progress in reading continues to improve so that a strong culture of reading in the school is further embedded
- attainment and progress in writing continues to improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Barry Found
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with the headteacher and a range of other school leaders to discuss the school's effectiveness. I visited classrooms with the headteacher to observe pupils' learning, talk to pupils and look at their work. I heard Year 1 pupils read, and I also looked at the quality of work in a range of pupils' books. I considered the 31 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including 31 free-text comments, 32 responses to the staff survey and 28 responses to the pupil questionnaire. I had meetings with groups of pupils to discuss their views about the school and spoke to pupils informally.

I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also met with the school's local authority school improvement partner and spoke on the telephone to a national leader of education who has supported the school in the recent past. I evaluated the school's safeguarding arrangements. A wide range of documents was examined, including: the school's self-evaluation; school improvement planning; information about pupils' progress; and various policies. I also examined the school's website.