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Mrs Janet Leggett
Headteacher
Castle Hill Primary School
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Dear Mrs Leggett

Short inspection of Castle Hill Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 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.

You are totally committed to providing the pupils in your care with high-quality education. You and your team know your pupils well. Work to support pupils' social and emotional needs is a strength of the school.

Your self-evaluation document of the school's overall effectiveness is very well written. It is succinct, yet clearly outlines the school's current position. It lists the school's strengths and indicates a manageable number of pertinent areas for development. It also gives details of where the evidence for your judgements can be found.

Your school improvement plan addresses the areas for development that you have identified. It clearly explains the actions that you and your team are taking, with details of the resources you need. Overall success criteria are included, alongside where the evidence of impact can be found.

Following the last inspection, leaders were asked to ensure that pupils' progress accelerated in lower key stage 2. During this inspection, I found that teachers carefully check pupils' work and use their findings to plan future lessons. Tasks are well matched to pupils' varying needs and abilities. Leaders use a variety of methods to check the quality of teaching. Strengths and areas for development are

fed back to teachers, and support and advice is given. As a result, work in pupils' books shows that they are making good progress.

Leaders were also asked to further accelerate progress in writing, particularly for the most able pupils, in key stage 2. Work in this area has been slowed because of a number of changes in staff. There has been an increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in writing in Year 6, year on year. However, this remains below the national average. The proportion reaching the higher standard in Year 6 also remains below average. Current school data and work in pupils' exercise books show that the proportions of pupils working at age-related expectations and above have increased over this year. This improvement is especially marked in Year 6. However, some teachers do not have high enough expectations for what pupils can achieve.

Governors have a thorough knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have created a concise document for parents, outlining what the school has achieved and plans for future improvement. They use reports from school leaders, published data and visits to the school to inform their decisions and to help them to provide leaders with effective support and challenge. For example, they carefully evaluate the school's use of pupil premium funding to make sure that it has maximum effect on the pupils it is designed to support.

Pupils have lots of opportunities to take on additional responsibilities. These include acting as librarians, house captains, anti-bullying ambassadors, playground pals, buddy readers and being members of the communication team. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about a range of different subjects that they enjoy in the school. They were particularly keen to tell me about the visits and visitors that are used to enhance their learning. Year 6 pupils were able to tell me about the different activities they did on their recent residential trip and others were keen to show the work they had completed with an artist.

Most parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View praise the work of the school, saying that their children enjoy the school and are making good progress. They say that the breakfast and after-school clubs are excellent. One parent said: 'Children are thriving thanks to the hard work and support of the staff.' However, a small number of parents think that the school needs to do more to engage with parents and that communication needs to improve.

Safeguarding is effective.

All safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Leaders have made sure that all staff are well trained and are given regular updates. Staff understand their responsibilities and confidently report all concerns, no matter how small. Record-keeping is clear and well organised. Actions are taken in a timely manner, with external agencies being involved when appropriate. As a result, there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school.

Pupils who made their views known say that they feel safe in the school and that there is a trusted adult at the school they can talk to if something is worrying them. Several pupils talked about being able to feed their concerns to the 'Worry Monster'. Two Year 6 pupils summed up their thoughts by saying: 'There is no bullying, just some occasional, minor bickering.' Pupils from a range of different year groups could talk confidently about how they are taught to keep themselves safe online and when crossing the road or riding their bikes.

Most parents speak positively about the way the school cares for their children. However, a small number expressed concerns about bullying. Some parents expressed opposing views about the way the school deals with concerns that they raise. Some praise the school for the swift, effective responses, but others say they feel that their concerns are dismissed.

Inspection findings

- Work to improve pupils' writing skills has had a positive effect on their outcomes in the early years and key stage 1. The proportion of children achieving the writing early learning goal was above the national average in 2018. The proportion of pupils in Year 2 reaching the expected and greater depth standards in writing has improved over time. For example, the proportion reaching the expected standard was above the national average in 2018. Pupils of all ages have opportunities to practise and apply their writing skills in a range of subjects for different purposes and audiences. However, we agreed that there are some inconsistencies in the teaching of writing across the school.
- Good practice in mathematics has been shared across the school and has resulted in a consistent approach to teaching mathematics. Pupils are encouraged to use apparatus and pictures to support their learning, and this has resulted in a greater understanding of different concepts. Work in pupils' exercise books shows that pupils of all abilities have opportunities to develop fluency, reasoning and problem-solving skills. Pupils have opportunities to practise and apply their mathematical skills in subjects such as science and geography. The proportion of pupils in mathematics reaching the expected standards in Years 2 and 6, the greater depth standard in Year 2 and the higher standard in Year 6 have risen over time. However, we agreed that improvements need to continue, including the sharing of best practice, to make sure that an even greater proportion of pupils meet these standards.
- Teaching and learning in phonics are strengths of the school. The proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in Year 1 has been consistently above the national average. The reading books made available to the pupils are well matched to their phonics ability, and pupils of all abilities and ages in the school show a love of reading.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils have opportunities to study a wide range of subjects and topics and speak with enthusiasm about their different learning experiences. They can make links between different areas of learning. Work displayed around the school and in books shows that pupils have opportunities to develop subject-specific skills. However, we agreed that work

needs to be done to make sure that these skills are built on as pupils move through the school.

- Pupils' attendance at the school is consistently above the national average. The proportion of pupils disadvantaged by poor attendance is also below the national average. However, the school is continuing to work to improve these figures further. They follow up absence well and have put many incentives in place to foster good attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a greater proportion of pupils reach and exceed the expected standards in writing and mathematics by the end of key stages 1 and 2
- work to develop the curriculum continues, so that pupils are able to build on subject-specific skills, year on year
- leaders continue to work with parents, so that they are confident that any concerns they raise will be swiftly addressed.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Calderdale. 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 you and a middle leader. I met with other leaders to discuss safeguarding and attendance. I met with four governors and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

As parents brought their children into school at the start of the school day, I was able to talk with several of them and hear their views on the school. I also took account of the 74 responses from parents to Parent View and one letter from a parent.

In lessons, I talked informally with pupils. I met formally with a group of pupils and took account of the 58 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey. I also met with a group of staff and took account of the 27 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.