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Mr Adam Sapey
Headteacher
Cornholme Junior, Infant and Nursery School
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Dear Mr Sapey

Short inspection of Cornholme Junior, Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 27 February 2018, 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. In the past year, there have been considerable changes to staffing and leadership roles. Most teachers are new since the last inspection and, since September 2017, you have appointed a new deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and English leader. Despite these changes, you have effectively sustained positive outcomes for pupils. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stages 1 and 2 has generally been close to or above national averages in 2016 and 2017. Your response to Ofsted's mathematics survey visit in 2015 has also been positive and the teaching and leadership of mathematics are now becoming strengths of the school.

You have been keen to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You were tasked with enabling subject leaders to be more involved in checking pupils' achievement. You and other leaders are acutely aware of aspects of pupils' performance which could be even better, for example achievement for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, in response to the evaluations of pupils' outcomes in 2017, actions taken this year are already showing improvements in pupils' learning and development. Staff are highly focused on each individual pupil's well-being and progress. However, you accept that leaders would also benefit from taking a leadership overview about the performance of groups and cohorts across school.

You know the school and its pupils well and have established a culture which supports the development of pupils as rounded individuals. The school's motto, 'Together we will learn and grow' was quoted by pupils who were able to explain how it helps them to think about the importance of getting along with each other and working hard. Pupils talk with confidence about how teachers help them to try really difficult work which challenges their thinking but also makes their learning rewarding.

Governors' knowledge about the school is reinforced by their regular visits. This supports them in checking for themselves the impact of leaders' actions to secure improvements. Governors are also keen to listen to the views of parents, carers pupils and staff to help them gain a thorough understanding of what is working well and how the school could improve even further. However, they agree that more precise success criteria in leaders' action plans would enable them to hold school leaders even more rigorously to account for the attainment and progress of cohorts and groups of pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of keeping pupils safe. You have been committed to building strong relationships with families, particularly those facing challenging or complex circumstances. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. Staff are clear about safeguarding procedures as a result of the training they receive. Staff report concerns quickly and leaders respond with urgency.

Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare and they trust that adults will sort out any incidents of misbehaviour. They know who to talk to if they have any concerns and are aware of different types of bullying which could occur. They confidently explain how to stay safe online.

Inspection findings

- The proportion of children who reached a good level of development by the end of Reception improved in 2017 but remains below the national average. You are aware that not as many boys reached the early learning goals in reading, writing and number as did nationally, whereas girls' performance was much closer to the average for girls nationally. Leaders identified this area for development and you have taken action to raise expectations in Reception and make improvements to provision for boys. The classroom environment has been carefully set up with a range of tasks to inspire children, especially boys, to use and apply their newly acquired reading, writing and mathematics skills throughout the school day. Staff also have a secure awareness of children's next steps for learning. For example, staff know which stage each child is at with their pen grip and this helps them to effectively support children's writing development. Leaders agree that more closely tracking the progress of groups, for example boys, would help them to check the impact of their actions.

- When listening to pupils read, it became apparent that books do not always match closely enough to the phonics skills which pupils are learning. For those pupils in the earliest stages of learning to read, and particularly those who are struggling, this is hindering their progress. You agree that this is the next step in supporting these pupils to read more accurately and fluently.
- Attainment for disadvantaged pupils by the end of each key stage has been lower than for other pupils in school and other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016 and 2017. Leaders have taken prompt action to improve systems for checking pupils' attainment and progress throughout school. For example, pupil progress meetings are more rigorous in holding teachers to account for the progress made by each individual. You have utilised the expertise of staff effectively in providing precisely targeted intervention groups to support pupils identified as needing to catch up. The school's assessment information and work in pupils' books show that disadvantaged pupils are starting to make faster progress. However, you agree that without analysing the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in different subjects and year groups overall, leaders' checks on the impact of funding on provision for this group of pupils is limited. You are also keen to use this information to add more precise success criteria relating pupils' outcomes to leaders' action plans. This will support leaders in checking the impact of their actions more rigorously.
- There was a disappointing dip in the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standards at the end of each key stage in reading, writing and mathematics in 2017. You have responded effectively, though. Subject leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning are identifying where teachers need further support in providing challenge for all pupils. Training has resulted in staff having a much clearer understanding of the expectations for each year group and how to provide appropriate challenge. Pupils are very positive about their learning and recognise the challenge which teachers provide for them. They respond eagerly and are keen to challenge themselves, demonstrating resilience and perseverance when they come across tricky tasks. Already, work in books and the school's assessment information show that a much higher proportion of current pupils are working beyond the expected standards.
- Following an Ofsted mathematics survey visit in 2015, the leader for mathematics has transformed the teaching of mathematics throughout school. Pupils' outcomes have improved and, in 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was above the national average at the end of key stages 1 and 2. The leader has made sure that teachers have increased their subject knowledge so they are able to effectively plan units of work which build on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. Teachers plan for pupils to more frequently carry out reasoning and problem-solving activities. Teachers then use pupils' explanations to check their understanding so they know when they are ready to move on to more challenging tasks. Similarly, the training which teaching assistants have completed is supporting them in using more effective questioning with pupils. This is helping to develop pupils' mathematical understanding of the concepts being taught.
- Attendance improved in 2016/17 and was closer to the national average, both overall and for disadvantaged pupils. Additionally, the proportion of pupils who

were regularly absent reduced and was below national figures. The school's attendance figures for this school year show that improvements are being sustained.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- reading books are closely matched to pupils' phonics skills when they are in the early stages of learning to read
- action plans contain precise success criteria, with specific targets for groups and cohorts of pupils, so that leaders and governors are able to check the impact of their actions on improving outcomes for pupils
- leaders routinely analyse the attainment and progress of groups and cohorts of pupils in different subjects and year groups
- an increasing proportion of disadvantaged pupils reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Reception and key stages 1 and 2.

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

Kirsty Godfrey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, and the leader for English. I also met with two members of the governing body, including the chair, and I met with a representative of the local authority. I evaluated documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance records, and information about safeguarding. We visited classrooms together to observe teaching and learning. Together with the English and mathematics subject leaders, we scrutinised the work of a sample of pupils. I listened to three pupils read. I spoke with several parents and carers at the start of the school day and considered the 25 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also met with a group of pupils from a range of year groups.