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Mr Christopher Parkhouse
Headteacher
Harrogate, Grove Road Community Primary School
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Dear Mr Parkhouse

Short inspection of Harrogate, Grove Road Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 June 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 September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You began your role as headteacher in September 2017, having previously been the deputy headteacher. You set very high expectations for staff and pupils. Together with the assistant headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), you have been determined and ambitious for pupils at the school. Leaders and governors are passionate about the school providing a high-quality education for pupils. They are clear that not only is academic achievement important, but that emotional well-being is also critical to pupils' success and development. Leaders' inclusive approach has earned them a reputation for championing vulnerable pupils and providing a safe haven for those in need, and a place where all pupils can shine.

Leaders have a very accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have, therefore, prioritised appropriate school improvement actions. Improving the quality of teaching and learning was an area for improvement from the previous inspection. You have not been afraid to address teaching which has fallen short of your high expectations. In a short space of time, you have had significant impact on improving teaching and learning. Creating additional leadership capacity has been critical to achieving this. The local authority has also provided extensive support in the last year to enable the pace of change you have achieved, while new leaders have been appointed and are becoming more established.

Staff feel valued and appreciate the opportunities you provide for them to learn from each other. They are becoming increasingly reflective about the impact of

their teaching on pupils' learning. Additionally, adults' focus on helping pupils to understand how they can be effective learners has quickly become established. Pupils now demonstrate greater perseverance and resilience in their learning. Consequently, improving outcomes for current pupils are being secured throughout the school. Pupils' reading progress by the end of key stage 2 has been above the national average for the last two years and by 2017, reading attainment was also above average. However, improvements in key stage 1 reading attainment have been more recent. You are aware that many of the new approaches which have been implemented now need to become embedded so that recent improvements are sustained. Similarly, while an increasing proportion of pupils are meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check, you are aware that there is more to do to ensure that all pupils learn to read as soon as possible.

Staff know the pupils very well and model positive relationships. Consequently, parents and carers, as well as pupils, value their nurturing approach. Above-average attendance is testament to pupils' enjoyment of school and the value they see in their education.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have an ambitious vision for keeping pupils safe and have taken steps to further develop the school's strong culture of safeguarding. Rigorous procedures and training make sure that staff feel confident in how to recognise and report any cause for concern. They take the view that 'it could happen here' and this helps them to report any concern, no matter how small it may seem. Leaders use the detailed information they gather to spot any emerging patterns that might cause concern about a pupil, including any vulnerable pupil. Your proactive approach to keeping pupils safe ensures that a comprehensive package of support is put in place, often before a crisis point is reached.

Having recently secured arrangements for the SENCo to be non-class-based, you have created capacity for her to develop safeguarding practices further. She is using her accurate knowledge and understanding of pupils' specific needs, along with external support when required, to make sure that their needs are well met. Additional support, provided by the school to help pupils' social and emotional development and well-being, is having a very positive impact. This has prevented fixed-term exclusion for pupils identified as being at risk, and therefore they continue to learn in school in a safe environment.

The vast majority of pupils feel safe and are very confident that adults would listen to them should any issues arise. A very small number have experienced bullying. You have already made plans to give pupils more of a voice when resolving any reports of bullying. Pupils say that behaviour is usually good and that they take care of each other. They understand how the behaviour system makes sure that sanctions are in place so that their learning is not disrupted.

Inspection findings

- In 2017, there was a decline in the proportion of children who reached a good level of development by the end of Reception. However, this group of children had much lower starting points than has been typical before. They made good progress during their time in the early years. Likewise, children currently in Reception are being well supported with their early reading and writing development; they demonstrate strong progress from their starting points. Children showed me that they were keen to write independently and explained that they had been inspired to do so through their work on story-telling.
- Leaders have prioritised developing a love of reading in pupils. 'Bertie the bus' is used well by pupils and is accessible to parents each day. This helps parents to get involved in choosing books with their children. In the early stages of learning to read, pupils' books are well matched to their phonics knowledge. This is helping them to read accurately and with increasing confidence so they can become more fluent with their reading. The proportion of pupils meeting the standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has increased and by 2017, the proportion was above the national average. However, in the last three years, disadvantaged pupils have underperformed in the Year 1 phonics screening check when compared with their peers. You have begun making further improvements to the teaching of phonics so that pupils learn to read as soon as possible. You have appointed a new leader for September who will be responsible for this. Additionally, you are using research-based evidence to identify appropriate interventions for pupils who need to catch up.
- You have accurately identified that many disadvantaged pupils have limited access to a wide range of vocabulary and this is a barrier to their achievement. Leaders have made sure that pupils are immersed in drama and story-telling activities which are successfully developing these pupils' confidence and their understanding of language. Consequently, by the end of key stage 2 in 2017, all disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard in reading. Similarly, disadvantaged pupils' reading progress has been at least average for the last two years.
- You are acutely aware that many pupils start school other than at the usual times, and often speak little or no English. By prioritising pupils' language development, you have been successful in achieving increasingly positive outcomes for these pupils as they progress through the school. You are now keen to consolidate the new approaches which have been introduced so that the improvements in all pupils' outcomes can be sustained.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they consolidate the many new approaches which have been implemented so that improvements in pupils' outcomes are sustained
- phonics teaching, particularly for those pupils who need to catch up, continues to develop so that pupils learn to read as soon as possible.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, 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

Kirsty Godfrey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the assistant headteacher and the SENCo. 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 leader for English, we scrutinised the work of a sample of pupils. I listened to five pupils read. I spoke with several parents at the start of the school day and considered the 61 responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View. I talked to a sample of pupils and a large group of staff and considered the 27 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 30 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.