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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Joanne Grainger
Headteacher
Hunton and Arrathorne Community Primary School
Hunton
Bedale
North Yorkshire
DL8 1QB

Dear Mrs Grainger

Short inspection of Hunton and Arrathorne Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 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 last inspected in December 2013.

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's motto, 'caring, aspiring, excelling', is central to all that the school does. Your focus on creating a warm and caring ethos means that pupils are happy and feel well supported. All staff are proud to work at the school. As this is a small school, staff know every pupil well and can, therefore, support their needs. Staff show the upmost commitment and dedication to the pupils and the community they serve.

Governors provide you with effective support and challenge. They know the strengths and areas for improvement of the school very well. They visit the school regularly to evaluate the priorities in the school improvement plan. Governors frequently review their skills to ensure that the governing body has an effective skill set. Governors are not complacent. They are sharp in their analysis of what needs to be done to move the school forward.

Pupils are well behaved. You set high standards of behaviour. As a result, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils are polite and respectful to visitors. They show tolerance towards others. One pupil told me: 'We treat others the way we would like to be treated ourselves.' Pupils have an increasing understanding of British values. They talk with interest about different religions and cultures. Pupils also told me they enjoy their weekly news assemblies where they learn about events in this country and around the world.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. All parents, in response to the Ofsted online parent survey, said they would recommend the school to another parent. One parent said the pupils are 'well looked after and nurtured'. Another parent commented that staff are 'caring and compassionate'.

Since the previous inspection, you have made writing a whole-school priority. Pupils have an increasing number of opportunities to develop their writing skills across the wider curriculum. They write more creatively due to the interesting topics they write about. Pupils have an increasing understanding of what successful writing looks like. Writing opportunities are well linked to their experiences, including trips, visits, and the books they read. As a result, attainment and progress in writing are improving.

A further area for improvement at the previous inspection was to reduce pupils' over-reliance on their teachers. During the inspection, I saw pupils working independently, discussing ideas with their peers and using classroom resources to help them before asking the teacher. Pupils told me that they enjoy their learning, and they often feel challenged. However, they also said that they would like increasing opportunities to collaborate in their learning.

You ensure that action plans focus on the key priorities to improve the school further. However, you and the governing body recognise that action plans can be further improved by the addition of interim milestones to judge the impact of actions on pupils' progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff training is up to date. Staff understand the important role they play in keeping pupils safe. Pupils told me that they feel safe in school and that they enjoy school because it is welcoming. Parents, in response to the Ofsted online survey, agree that their children feel safe and happy in school.

Pupils told me that bullying is very rare in school. School records show this is the case. Pupils are confident that they can talk to an adult if they have any worries or concerns. They feel well cared for. Consequently, relationships between staff and pupils are strong.

Safer recruitment procedures are followed and checks on staff are appropriate. However, you acknowledged that welfare records, including cause for concern records, need to be more effectively organised to ensure more detailed recording of follow-up actions and next steps.

Inspection findings

- Pupils attend school well. Attendance for all groups of pupils remains above the national average. The money the school receives to support disadvantaged pupils is used well. As a result, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved compared to last academic year.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced. You ensure that pupils have access to a range of enrichment opportunities. Pupils talked to me enthusiastically about the visits from religious groups, eco-club and the various trips and visits. During the inspection, I heard pupils from Years 2 to 6 practising for the Wensleydale Tournament of Song. They sang with confidence and enthusiasm.
- Strong provision in the early years has led to an increasing number of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception. The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development last year was well above the national average. Children learn in a stimulating environment. Positive relationships between staff and children mean that children make good progress from their starting points. Parents told me that they feel well informed about the progress of their children.
- You place high importance on reading. Pupils read widely and often. There is a culture of reading across the school. As a result, reading attainment is above the national average in key stages 1 and 2.
- During the inspection, I wanted to check the school's work to improve attainment in mathematics. You have made mathematics a whole-school priority. Staff talk positively about the recent training they received on bar modelling. This is evident in pupils' books. Pupils told me they feel challenged in their mathematics lessons. There is now more evidence of problem-solving and reasoning activities in pupils' books. Teachers ensure that mathematics methods and facts are consistently re-enforced. As a result, more pupils are on track to achieve at greater depth in Year 2 and the higher standard in Year 6 this year. However, you acknowledge that there is still work to do to ensure that a higher proportion of pupils, particular the most able, achieve at the higher standard.
- An area for improvement at the previous inspection was to improve writing. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve. There is a strong focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar. As a result, in 2017 a higher proportion of Year 6 pupils achieved the expected standards in the grammar, punctuation and spelling tests than nationally. Pupils present their writing well. They show pride in their work. More pupils are writing with enthusiasm. Pupils have opportunities across all year groups to edit and improve their work. This helps to close gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills. Writing remains a key whole-school focus. Your aim is to ensure that more pupils achieve the higher standard in writing by the end of Year 6.
- Although safeguarding arrangements are effective, and pupils feel safe, you acknowledge that welfare records need to more effectively reflect actions taken, including next steps.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to ensure appropriate challenge in pupils' learning, particularly for most able pupils, so that a higher proportion of pupils achieve a greater depth in key stage 1 and the higher standard in key stage 2

- improvement plans include interim milestones to judge the impact of actions on pupils' progress
- safeguarding and welfare records are more effectively organised to include more detailed recording of specific actions taken, the impact of actions and next steps.

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

Michele Costello
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I made visits to all classes. I also looked at the work in pupils' books with you and the English leader. I met with you, and all of your staff. I met with five governors, including the chair, and vice-chair, of the governing body. I also met with the local authority school improvement adviser.

I attended an assembly and listened to a singing session attended by pupils in Years 2 to 6.

I took account of the 15 responses from parents to the Ofsted survey, Parent View, and the 14 free-text comments. I also considered the seven responses to the Ofsted staff survey and the 32 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey. I met with a group of staff. I talked informally to pupils during lunchtime and in lessons. I met formally with all pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. I spoke to a number of parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day. I listened to some pupils from Year 1 read and discussed their reading with them.

I examined a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation, assessment information, governors' minutes, local authority visit reports, attendance and behaviour logs, and safeguarding records.