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Mr Paul Birdsall
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Birdsall

Short inspection of Crofton Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 10 January 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 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in November 2015, you have successfully managed several changes in staffing and governance. You have taken bold action to restructure your leadership team, the members of which are ably supporting you in helping to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Morale among staff is high and they share the leadership team's collective vision for improving pupils' outcomes. New governors have been recruited to add to the expertise of more experienced governors. They bring a range of helpful skills and experience to the table. They are well led by the experienced and knowledgeable chair of governors. Governors are regular visitors into school and use their first-hand experience to ask challenging questions which effectively hold leaders to account.

You are committed to ensuring that you provide a wide range of opportunities to support pupils' enjoyment and interests. Pupils say they enjoy visits that broaden their horizons and welcome special visitors into school, including authors who inspire and help instil a love of reading. Extra-curricular activities, such as karate, netball, a book club, gymnastics and a choir, enrich pupils' experiences beyond the curriculum. Many pupils enjoy the challenge of competing and achieve highly in a variety of sporting competitions, such as rugby, football, netball and athletics.

Despite the considerable changes in staffing, you have successfully addressed key areas for improvement from the last inspection. One area for development tasked

the school to make pupils more independent in their learning. Teachers' high expectations and clear guidance ensures that pupils are independent and very supportive when cooperating and sharing ideas with one another. Another area for development was to ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop their mathematics skills. Pupils of all abilities now have ample opportunities to apply their skills when grappling with real-life problems. The school was also tasked with ensuring that the needs of the most able are met. At the end of key stage 2 in 2017, an above average proportion of the most able pupils met the expected standard in writing and reading. You acknowledge more work is needed, particularly in writing and reading, to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your staff and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have created a vigilant culture throughout the school. All members of staff receive regular training and updates to ensure that they recognise and respond to signs of concern when they arise. Robust procedures are in place to ensure the safe recruitment and induction of new staff.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. Responses from parents and carers also indicated that they are confident that their children are kept safe. Pupils say that bullying is rare and, should it occur, they have absolute confidence it will be dealt with seriously and firmly. Pupils are taught different ways to keep themselves safe. They were able to explain clearly how to keep themselves safe online and not to disclose personal information to strangers.

Inspection findings

- You and your leadership team have accurately identified the need to improve the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils throughout the school. Your own self-evaluation in regard to this area was identical to my first line of enquiry around the performance of disadvantaged pupils. Your actions have resulted in a considerable increase in the number of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. You have also taken steps to improve this group of pupils' writing and reading skills. Pupils enjoy the challenge of devouring reading books and answering questions through an online reading programme. The pupils are highly motivated by reading. As a result, there are some green shoots of success in ensuring that these pupils achieve more highly. You acknowledge that more disadvantaged pupils need to make greater progress, particularly in reading and writing, in order to diminish the difference and catch up with other pupils nationally by the time they leave the school.
- My second line of enquiry focused on the impact of leaders' actions to improve standards for disadvantaged and most-able pupils in mathematics. This was because the previous inspection report stated that the needs of most-able pupils needed to be improved. You and your leaders' actions have been highly effective. Collectively, you have ensured that the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, thrive on solving knotty mathematical problems. Inspection

evidence shows that the current most able and disadvantaged pupils are achieving highly. You have ensured that pupils' progress is being effectively built on from key stage 1.

- Pupils' outcomes in reading and writing were not as strong as mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. Progress in writing has been below the national average in 2016 and 2017. Leaders have rightly prioritised the development of pupils' writing. Pupils, particularly the most able, are beginning to demonstrate greater skills in producing well-crafted sentences that paint a clear picture in the reader's mind. However, we agreed that pupils of all abilities, particularly boys and middle-ability pupils, should be given further opportunities to apply and embed their writing skills in a wider range of subjects.
- You and your teachers have raised the profile of reading throughout the school, using a richer range of books to inspire reading. As a result of wider reading, pupils are becoming adept in understanding the language choices made by authors. As a consequence, this is helping pupils to understand the author's intent and to read between the lines. Pupils are starting to use their improved reading skills and knowledge of a broader range of vocabulary to enliven their writing.
- Since the previous inspection, overall attendance, specifically that of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, has often been below the level found nationally. Leaders and staff have emphasised the importance of school and have adopted a firmer approach to improving attendance. As a result, the attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved greatly, reflecting above average attendance. Despite leaders' best efforts, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has not improved at the same rate as other pupils in the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils of all abilities, particularly boys and middle-ability pupils, are given opportunities to apply their writing skills in a wide range of subjects
- disadvantaged pupils make greater progress, especially in reading and writing, to reduce the differences in achievement between these pupils and other pupils nationally
- disadvantaged pupils' attendance improves so that they are not missing out on valuable learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Brian Stillings
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held meetings with you, the subject leaders for mathematics and English and two governors. I also discussed the school's work with a representative from the local authority. We visited classrooms together to observe teaching and learning. I reviewed samples of pupils' work in writing, mathematics and topic books; this was done jointly with subject leaders for mathematics and English. I talked with pupils during lessons and listened to pupils read. I evaluated documentation, including: the school improvement plan; the school's own self-evaluation; the school's assessment information; safeguarding and child protection records; attendance and behaviour records. I looked at the online questionnaire (Parent View) to gather 40 parents' views about the school and spoke with parents prior to the start of school.