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8 April 2019

Mrs Susan Marshall
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Dear Mrs Marshall

Short inspection of Cowling Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 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 February 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Parents, carers and pupils have a positive view of the school for a number of reasons. Pupils feel safe and can explain why this is the case. Parents also believe that their children are happy and well cared for by adults. Leaders and teachers are approachable, and if there are concerns, parents and pupils feel that adults in school listen to them and respond appropriately.

Behaviour is a strength of the school. Pupils conduct themselves well at different times of the day and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. This means that pupils want to do their best and try hard in class. This contributes to the strong progress pupils make. It also means that behaviour rarely disrupts learning and that more serious behaviour incidents, including bullying, are rare.

At the last inspection, inspectors made a number of recommendations to support further improvements in the teaching of writing. Inspectors suggested that all pupils across all key stages, and especially boys, be given clearer guidance on how to improve their writing and that there needed to be a stronger focus on pupils using spelling, punctuation and grammar more accurately in their writing. Inspectors also recommended that pupils write at length more regularly. Since the last inspection, there have been some improvements in writing for different groups, including boys. This has been seen especially in the early years and at key stage 1. The school has also taken action to support pupils' reading as a way to improve pupils' writing skills. This has been a successful part of the school's journey since the last

inspection; reading attainment and progress have improved across the school and for different groups. The success has had an impact on writing outcomes, although it has been slower than expected in key stage 2 for different groups, including boys.

Safeguarding is effective.

The systems to keep pupils safe are effective. The procedures are regularly checked and updated to make sure that all adults work to keep pupils safe and well safeguarded. This means that staff and governors receive regular training and know what to do if they spot a concern or a concern is reported to them. Parents, staff and pupils are kept abreast of the school's policies and practices through different events such as assemblies and training, as well as via the school's website and the numerous posters around school. There are checks made on staff, including volunteers, to ensure that the adults are suitable to work with children and that they have the right qualifications for the roles they have. These checks meet legal requirements. Whenever there are issues reported, the school keeps detailed records and liaises closely with a range of external agencies to ensure that the right people are made aware of issues, and so the school can seek specialist advice where necessary.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I wanted to understand how well boys' needs are understood and met by teachers and leaders. This is because boys tend to do less well than girls in school. The school has seen this is an issue and has adjusted the curriculum to ensure that boys are fully engaged in their learning.
- As a result, boys' attainment and progress are improving; this is particularly the case in the early years and in key stage 1. It is also apparent in reading and mathematics across the school. In writing, attainment and progress are getting stronger for boys, although they are still lower than seen nationally.
- I was also interested to see how well disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do in school. Disadvantaged pupils have not always done as well as their peers, historically. However, both of these groups are doing well. Their needs are well understood and very closely considered. At various points in the year their progress is checked, and where support is needed, this is provided and is effective.
- In addition, there is real expertise in the school to support the varying needs of these different groups of pupils. Different adults, including leaders, have been well trained and are given time to focus on individual pupils so that where these pupils need more support, the support provided is bespoke and effective. As a result, these pupils make strong progress and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.
- I was interested to understand how the school maintains high levels of attendance, as it has done for many years. There is also a very low rate of persistent absenteeism in school. Pupils enjoy school and feel very safe and happy in school, as they report and as behaviour records show. Therefore, they are very pleased and willing to go to school every day.

- Part of the pupils' clear enjoyment of school linked to another area I wanted to investigate within the inspection. I wanted to see how well the curriculum meets pupils' needs, in terms of teaching them key skills and supporting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as their understanding of life in modern Britain. These areas are strengths of the school.
- The curriculum supports positive behaviour and well-being because it engages pupils well and teaches them about topics and subjects which go beyond their everyday experiences. In this respect, the school ensures that there is a range of special activities, including trips and visitors into school, to support pupils' learning in the curriculum. These trips enhance the learning as well as provide pupils with the opportunities to see the world from different perspectives. As such, the pupils demonstrate real respect, tolerance and interest for different faiths and cultures. Trips to local mosques and temples, as well as churches, are examples of how pupils' understanding of faith has been widened.
- In the same way, the pupils attend assemblies where visitors speak to them about various subjects, including the different lifestyle choices people make around their sexual orientation. Again, by providing these experiences and this knowledge of difference, pupils understand the importance of respect and tolerance of those differences.
- Furthermore, the curriculum offers pupils the regular opportunities to practise and improve their reading, writing and mathematics skills. Pupils believe that the work they do is important and helpful to them in their development, which is why they behave well, attend well and do their best in class and around school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to work to improve pupils' outcomes in writing, especially for boys, by ensuring that pupils continue to write on a regular basis, thus further improving their technique and accuracy in writing.

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

Fiona McNally
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I observed teaching in all classes to see its effect on learning. I also looked at a wide range of pupils' books from several year groups, across a variety of subjects. I

met with you and with other senior and middle leaders. I also held a meeting with governors and a representative from the local authority. I looked at the school's information about the safeguarding of pupils and examined behaviour and records. I also checked a range of other documentation, including your self-evaluation, your school development plan and your assessment information. I held formal discussions with some pupils from Years 1 to 6 and spoke informally to several pupils during breaktime. I considered the parents' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and to parents' responses to the free-text questionnaire. I also spoke to parents in the playground as they brought their children to school.