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18 May 2018

Miss Estelle Weir
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Weir

Short inspection of Oatlands Community Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 24 April 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in September 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your team have carefully reviewed teaching and learning, assessment procedures and the curriculum. You have, as a result, brought in changes that are making sure that more pupils achieve the best outcomes possible across the school. Consequently, in 2017, the proportions of pupils in key stage 2 who reached the expected standards were above those seen nationally. In addition, you and your team have enabled pupils to work at a high standard of understanding and, again, the proportion reaching this level was above that seen nationally. Currently, most pupils in all year groups are making rapid progress and those ready to move on to the next stage in their education are well prepared.

Since your appointment to the role of headteacher, you have worked hard to develop the already good standard of teaching in school further. Through the work of leaders across the school, the proportion of teaching and learning that is of the highest standard is increasing. In addition, there is now an open-door culture among staff where everyone is confident and happy to have colleagues see them in action in their own classrooms, without feeling that they are being judged. This has increased the opportunities for everyone to see high-quality teaching across different year groups and subjects and then incorporate what they have seen into their own practice. However, this is still an area for development for leaders because, although much improved, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment remains inconsistent across lessons and subjects.

This change in culture, and renewed excitement in teaching, was explained by one member of staff: 'I feel like a newly qualified teacher again – excited about what I'm doing and the new approaches I'm now empowered by leaders to try out.'

Your team's commitment to pupils' academic development is matched by its ongoing commitment to their wider personal and social development. Pupils are very sociable and exhibit a genuine concern for each other. Pupils are extremely supportive of their peers in the classroom when they are learning. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, pupils were confident to share their ideas and take friendly criticism from others as they attempted to write a tension-filled description. Pupils are very polite and friendly and show a genuine interest in visitors to their school. There is a calm and orderly atmosphere around school, and pupils arrive at lessons ready and willing to learn.

Teachers and leaders are appreciative of the opportunities they have been given to extend their own practice, develop new approaches to learning and take on challenges. Staff understand the changes that you have put in place and can see the positive impact on pupils' learning. They feel that they are now able to take the initiative and have real ownership of what is happening within their school. The online survey overwhelmingly indicates that staff are proud to work at Oatlands Community Junior School.

The governing body is made up of a committed group of individuals who bring a wealth of experience and wide range of skills to support the school. Governors have a good understanding of the priorities of the school and the actions that need to be taken to address them. You provide governors with regular updates on pupils' progress that they question at committee and full governing body meetings. In addition, they regularly visit the school to check that the information provided by leaders is accurate.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders and governors maintain a continual focus on pupils' safety and wellbeing and have established a strong culture of safeguarding. Careful checks are made on the suitability of all adults working in your school. You have ensured that all staff receive up-to-date training on key safeguarding issues. School leaders and governors carry out regular reviews of safeguarding practice. Policies and procedures are fit for purpose. The vast majority of pupils feel safe in school and their parents and carers agree. Pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 speak confidently about being able to talk to adults in school if they have any concerns or problems. In addition, younger pupils see their Year 6 peers as very good role models who can help them deal with any worries. You have introduced a system for pupils to come and talk to members of the leadership team – again, to share any concerns. This is viewed as being very supportive by pupils. They feel that bullying is rare in school and, if it did happen, it would be tackled effectively by their teachers. Pupils also have a very good knowledge of how to stay safe online and are very clear as to when they can access different types of social media.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have worked assiduously to make sure that everyone understands the importance of attending school. Discussions with pupils clearly illustrate their understanding of the need to attend regularly. As one pupil explained, 'You learn something new every day at school and this helps you to get a good job.'
- You recognise that there is a small group of pupils who have a negative impact on attendance figures. In some cases support is necessary for the family as a whole to help improve their child's attendance. Through ongoing rigorous analysis of attendance information, the barriers to improving pupils' attendance are identified. Personalised support is then put in place for both parent and child. As a result, attendance has risen for all groups of pupils and is increasingly in line with national figures.
- Leaders in school are taking effective action in supporting disadvantaged pupils. As a result, from their starting points, disadvantaged pupils are currently making strong progress. Your coordinator for special educational needs (SENCo) accurately monitors the progress of these pupils and takes quick action to address any underperformance. You and your teachers have carefully examined different ways of supporting disadvantaged pupils through accessing local and national training. As a result of this research, teachers are able to identify and put into place those approaches that best suit their pupils. In addition, the school has made sure that vulnerable pupils are fully included in the life of the school and can access everything that Oatlands Community Junior School has to offer.
- In school, the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is below average. The relatively new SENCo has focused carefully on changing the approach within school for supporting and teaching pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Time has been spent on reviewing all current practice to make sure that it is providing the best possible support and having a positive impact on pupils' learning. The SENCo has a good knowledge of the needs of the families and their children. This knowledge is used to provide tailored support for each pupil, which is monitored for impact on learning as well as personal development and welfare. Teachers are clear about pupils' particular needs because of the information they have at their fingertips. They use this information well to adapt planning and teaching approaches to make sure that every pupil can access learning. The SENCo is proactive in accessing support from a range of different outside agencies for pupils and also from other schools in the local area. These approaches enable pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to make good progress from their different starting points.
- You and your leadership team are very aware of the need to make sure that pupils with high prior attainment in mathematics are challenged appropriately. The subject lead for mathematics has worked with teachers on a number of areas to increase the level of challenge in lessons. This has included the use of high-level problem-solving and reasoning tasks, moving pupils on to more challenging areas of learning at a quicker pace, and careful use of assessment information to plan for future lessons. As a result, the school's internal tracking systems and work in books show that pupils across the school are now making better progress and, in Year 6, this progress is rapid.

- In 2017, pupils with middle prior attainment did not perform as well as pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, this has been a key focus for leaders and teachers within school. Since your appointment, you have reviewed how classes are organised and whether pupils' needs are being met well. The subsequent changes you have made have resulted in all pupils being carefully targeted to achieve the higher standards, not simply those who may have been in the 'top' set. The subject leaders for mathematics and English have worked in partnership to look at how to improve outcomes for the most able pupils. The curriculum has been reviewed to ensure that it is meeting the needs of pupils and that teachers plan motivating and interesting lessons. Pupils now have access to their own book club. Mathematics through sport has been instigated. You have utilised the skills of specialist teachers from local secondary schools to provide additional challenging experiences for pupils. These actions have led to most middle-attaining pupils, in key stage 2, making stronger progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently strong across all year groups and subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of governors, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, 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

Anne Vernon
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and members of your senior leadership team. I held a meeting with a group of pupils and talked with pupils less formally in lessons. I also met with three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. In addition, I met with the chief executive officer of the Red Kite Learning Trust. I met with the SENCo. I undertook a range of short visits to lessons with you. I also looked at pupils' work in books. I examined the school self-evaluation and associated action plans as well as other documents, including assessment information, attendance information and pupil tracking. I checked the compliance of the school website. I scrutinised safeguarding documents, including the single central record and suitable checks on staff. I took account of 109 free-text responses from parents and 117 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also took account of 57 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire and 17 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.