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Mrs Elizabeth Foster
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Foster

Short inspection of Cromford CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 February 2017, 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 2012.

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 is characterised by its strong Christian ethos and its warm, family atmosphere. Every pupil is highly valued and known well by you and your staff. Consequently, pupils are effectively supported, as the school motto says, to 'learn, aspire and achieve in a caring Christian environment'.

You lead the school with energy and enthusiasm and have the respect of pupils, parents and staff alike. You ensure that this very small school is a harmonious and productive place to be. You have a good working knowledge of everyday matters, as well as the strategic overview required to shape and drive further improvements. Leaders have tackled areas for improvement from the previous inspection effectively.

Teachers consistently create a positive climate for learning. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and foster good relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic and confident learners.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that the safeguarding of pupils is a high priority. The single central record indicates that all required checks are made to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. You ensure that staff receive the appropriate training, including training relating to protecting pupils from extremism and radicalisation. You know your pupils exceptionally well and are alert to the things that make them vulnerable. Staff are vigilant and case studies show that you take prompt and decisive action when it is needed. The school site is secure, safe and welcoming.

Pupils are taught effectively about everyday risks and how to manage these in a sensible way. Pupils who I spoke to said that they felt safe in all parts of the school. They told me that bullying and name-calling are extremely rare and, if they ever happen, staff deal with it quickly and fairly. Pupils are alert to the dangers of using the internet and social media and know what to do if they see anything that concerns them. Parents told me that you do everything possible to ensure that their children are safe, happy and well.

Inspection findings

- Your effective strategic leadership and high ambitions for all pupils have ensured that the school has continued to move forward. All staff, governors, pupils and parents share your vision. As a result, pupils make good progress, have positive attitudes to learning and thoroughly enjoy learning together.
- Governors share your high expectations and demonstrate high levels of commitment to pupils and their families. They visit the school regularly and, consequently, are knowledgeable about all aspects of the school's effectiveness.
- All of the school's work is sprinkled with references to its Christian values and beliefs. This successfully supports pupils to be responsible citizens through understanding that the values and beliefs associated with their school are shared within British culture.
- Pupils behave well around school and in class. They are respectful towards each other and adults alike. Actions to improve attendance are beginning to reap rewards. Your in-depth knowledge of families is enabling you to support pupils and their families exactly where and when it is needed. Consequently, attendance is improving towards the national average. Nevertheless, attendance remains an area for school improvement.
- A successful whole-school approach to phonics is ensuring that pupils are making good progress in all year groups. Younger pupils use their knowledge of phonics well to help them read unfamiliar words. The most able pupils are challenged to read books of an appropriate level of difficulty in order to fully develop their reading skills.
- Pupils were keen to show me their writing books. They told me that in literacy lessons they were encountering more exciting texts which are stimulating their interest in writing. Pupils' basic skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling are

good. Increasingly, pupils are writing at greater length and with fluency and purpose.

- The very small numbers in each year group, which are often in single figures, mean it is not valid to make comparisons about pupils' achievements with those seen nationally. However, it is clear that individual pupils make good progress from their different starting points. This is because the school tracks the progress of individual pupils carefully, ensuring that any who are identified as in danger of falling behind are supported well.
- You are developing a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils. Extra-curricular clubs, visits, visitors and home learning enrich pupils' experiences well. Music is a particular strength and many pupils are learning to play a musical instrument. However, pupils do not always make the connections between subjects and, consequently, they are not fully able to exploit the links in their learning.
- You have rightly identified that in such a small school, opportunities for staff to regularly observe and share good practice are limited. As a result, you are beginning to work collaboratively with other local schools to increase these opportunities and enable staff to reflect more fully on their own practice.
- All of the parents who talked with me during my visit spoke very highly about the school. They praised the school's 'open door' policy and said that even the smallest concern is listened to carefully and dealt with swiftly. One parent said, reflecting the views of many, 'I am thrilled with this school'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders develop the recent work to improve attendance in order to bring attendance in line with the national average
- teachers help pupils to fully understand what they are learning and why, in order to help them make better connections and progress in their learning
- leaders extend the use of collaborative working with other schools in order to build on the existing best practice within the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the English subject leader, two representatives of the governing body, a group of pupils and a representative of the local authority. I visited both classes to see pupils and staff at work. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, at breaktimes and during lessons. I met a number of parents informally at the beginning of the school day and considered the views of 18 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I evaluated a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies.