

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs Katie Adamski  
Creswell Junior School  
Elmton Road  
Creswell  
Worksop  
Nottinghamshire  
S80 4JD

Dear Mrs Adamski

### **Short inspection of Creswell Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 27 June 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 January 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 has a vibrant atmosphere, where the care of pupils and their enjoyment of learning are at the centre of the school's work. Relationships are strong and supportive; pupils consequently have positive attitudes to their learning and are eager to do their best.

You have developed a strong and dedicated team of staff, who share your high aspirations for the pupils. You provide high-quality professional development for staff and this ensures that teaching in the school is consistently good. Every effort is made to ensure that pupils achieve to the best of their ability and are well prepared for their next stage in education and beyond. Parents are highly supportive of the school. Many of those I spoke with during the inspection, or who responded to the online questionnaire, reflected the views of one parent who praised the staff for 'the amazing work and support they have given my children'.

The curriculum the school offers is broad and diverse. You make sure it will interest the pupils because you involve them in planning the themes they will study throughout the year. Pupils enjoy contributing to the ideas and appreciate the efforts of their teachers to make learning fun. They also understand that teachers need to plan work that will help them to develop good basic skills. Pupils also have a wide range of opportunities to extend their learning beyond the curriculum, including drama productions and sporting activities.

The previous inspection recommended that pupils should have wider opportunities to understand what life is like in other parts of the United Kingdom. The curriculum now includes many opportunities for pupils to learn more about life in modern Britain and to understand the values of tolerance and respect for those from other cultures. It was also recommended that the most able pupils should have more challenge in their learning. During visits to classrooms during this inspection, it was clear that pupils were working hard on difficult tasks while, at the same time, enjoying the challenge.

Recently you have identified the need to improve standards in writing and have provided training for teachers in a new approach that is helping pupils in all classes to improve their writing skills. There has been a clear improvement over the year, as I saw in pupils' books, but pupils' spelling is not always accurate and their writing in different subjects is not always of sufficiently good quality.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Clear procedures help staff raise any concerns they have and records show that these are followed up thoroughly. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of good quality.

You have used the school's website to provide parents with a range of useful resources about safeguarding, including links to other websites and contact details of organisations that can provide help and further information. Regular safeguarding newsletters ensure that parents are made aware of current issues.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and told me that it is a safe place where they are well looked after. They know which staff members make up the 'safeguarding team' and have confidence in all adults to resolve any problems. Pupils said that bullying is rare at the school. They also told me about the worry boxes in each classroom that they could use if they prefer. Staff who have pastoral roles know the pupils well and are vigilant in ensuring their well-being, monitoring vulnerable pupils carefully. Staff respond quickly to minor incidents so they do not escalate. As a result, behaviour is good.

### **Inspection findings**

- The curriculum, and the way it is organised, engages and fascinates pupils, making them want to learn. The thematic approach helps pupils to explore different subjects in greater depth, broaden their horizons and find out about life within and beyond the United Kingdom. Visits to different places of worship help them learn about other religions and cultures; the recent residential visit to France gave older pupils a chance to experience aspects of life in another country. Personal, social and health education is woven through the curriculum themes and is underpinned by the school's core values.
- The leadership team and the governing body have high aspirations for pupils. They have a clear drive to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching

and learning. Subject leaders play an active part in monitoring standards and ensuring that teaching is effective. The governing body regularly checks the progress being made towards improvement priorities.

- Since the last inspection, standards at the end of key stage 2 have mostly been above average for reading and mathematics, and broadly average for writing. The exception was in 2016, when standards dipped slightly overall. Teachers' assessments for pupils in Year 6 at the time of this inspection indicate that outcomes are expected to be higher this year than in 2016.
- The school's assessment information is detailed and shows that pupils make good progress from when they join the school in Year 3. As a result, year on year, a greater proportion of pupils achieve the standards expected for their age. Leaders use this information effectively to identify pupils who are not making enough progress and provide extra support for them. They also check the progress of different groups of pupils. The most able pupils make rapid progress and an increasing number of pupils are achieving standards that exceed those expected for their age, especially in reading and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils achieve standards that are similar to other pupils nationally who have the same starting points.
- The work in pupils' books shows that, since the beginning of the school year, pupils have made considerable progress. Work is generally neat and well presented. Pupils respond to the guidance they receive from teachers and they told me this helps them improve their work. The standard of work in books matches the assessment information and is appropriate to the age of the pupils. The most able pupils produce work of a high standard.
- You are developing a strong reading culture in the school and this is supported by the lively and interesting curriculum. Many of the themes suggested by pupils are linked to books and stories they know. Pupils told me that they enjoy reading for pleasure because 'it takes you to another place', but are aware of the importance of reading as a skill for life.
- Mathematics books show that pupils are maintaining a good standard of work, calculate accurately and solve mathematical problems well. Written evidence of activities that develop reasoning skills is more limited, though they were seen in lessons I visited. For example, pupils in Year 5 enjoyed the challenge of using their reasoning skills to find the missing information they needed to calculate the perimeters of irregular shapes.
- Writing books show that grammar is improving, but spelling and punctuation are not always accurate. Many examples of creative writing show how pupils' skills are developing. Although pupils use their literacy skills in other subjects, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for them to develop writing for different purposes.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers focus on improving pupils' basic skills, particularly in spelling, so that all written work is accurate and well punctuated
- teachers provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities to write for different audiences and purposes, in greater depth, and in different subjects and contexts.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Salt  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I carried out a learning walk with you, visiting a variety of lessons. I reviewed pupils' books to consider the standard of their work and the progress being made. I considered the assessment information held by the school.

I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher and also met with some members of staff to discuss different aspects of the school's work. I met with members of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I talked with a group of pupils and listened to some pupils read.

I reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including your self-evaluation document and the school's improvement plan. I took account of 48 responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, and spoke with some parents informally during the inspection. There were 52 responses to a questionnaire for staff and 129 responses to a questionnaire for pupils, which I also took into account.