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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mr Robert Bothma
Headteacher
Crophorne-with-Charlton CofE First School
Main Street
Crophorne
Persore
Worcestershire
WR10 3NB

Dear Mr Bothma

Short inspection of Crophorne-with-Charlton CofE First School

Following my visit to the school on 11 September 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 September 2014.

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 as headteacher, you have developed a shared vision for the school. You, together with senior leaders and an effective governing body, have correctly identified the strengths of your school and the areas which need further development. Everyone is working together to ensure that the education on offer for the pupils in your care is of the highest quality.

Pupils at your school are valued and inspired to flourish, both academically and personally, reflecting your core values of peace, love, honesty and forgiveness. You successfully apply your vision of 'Inspiring learning for life'. Comments from pupils included 'Let's just say it's a brilliant school to go to.' Parents and carers feel well supported and are very positive about the school. You are visible and approachable and know all the children well.

You have effectively addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection. Least-able pupils are given more demanding work and, as a result, are making better progress. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and their needs are catered for. The school provides a rich and diverse curriculum which includes promoting other cultures. As a result, pupils have the chance to learn about life outside their rural community.

You have used external support and challenge well to improve key priorities in the school. Other leaders have high aspirations for the school and they value their involvement in decision-making. Staff appreciate your consideration towards managing workload and work-life balance.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding and vigilance in the school. Staff know who to speak to if there is a concern about a child or an adult in the school. Your approach to safeguarding is meticulous. Records and procedures are of high quality and are regularly checked, updated and reviewed by the senior leadership team and governors. The single central record is compliant. Governors understand their role with regard to safeguarding and safer recruitment.

Parents appreciate the e-safety information provided by the school to help them keep their children safe at home. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe when using computers and social media. They say that bullying is not an issue.

Inspection findings

- In 2017, at the end of key stage 1, pupils achieved standards above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the proportion of middle-ability pupils achieving greater depth in reading and mathematics was below the national average. You rightly identified this as an area of priority. You hold discussions with teachers to identify middle-ability pupils who may be capable of working at standards that are higher than expected for their age.
- Staff have engaged positively with new initiatives in mathematics, English and the wider curriculum. This has improved standards over time. Work in pupils' books is of a good quality and provides opportunities for deeper thinking in mathematics and to write at length. In-school performance information and work in pupils' books show that pupils are making good progress throughout the school, with some pupils making very good progress. We did, however, agree that more precise teaching would further raise the proportion of pupils making very good progress. On occasion, teachers do not adapt their teaching to provide timely challenge.
- You have embedded a consistent approach to school improvement. A senior leader told me that there is a culture of 'What do we need to improve?' which drives improvement across the whole school. You have established a well-organised programme of monitoring and moderation, including with other schools. You and your leadership team analyse the progress of pupils and prioritise areas for improvement effectively. As a result, pupils' attainment at the end of Reception and key stage 1 is strong. The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check continues to be significantly above the national average.

- Through training and effective support, you are developing the capacity of middle leaders well. They are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. However, continued development is required so that middle leaders can have an even deeper impact within their areas of responsibility.
- In early years, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development – although in line with the national average – declined from 2016 and 2017. In 2017, the proportion of children exceeding the early learning goals was below the national averages in writing and reading.
- You have worked successfully to address these issues. In 2018, the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development was significantly above the national average. A greater proportion of children also exceeded the early learning goals in reading and mathematics. However, you recognise that the proportion of children exceeding the early learning goals in writing remains low and there is still work to do. Children are not given sufficient challenge to develop writing skills beyond what is expected for their age.
- You have ensured that the indoor and outdoor learning environments are well resourced so that learning can be extended for all children. Early years children and Year 1 pupils interact well in a mixed-age class. Children enjoy writing book reviews and being imaginative in the 'builder's merchants'. They organise themselves effectively, following quickly established routines.
- Practitioners observe Reception children closely to monitor their progress. They use this information well to plan next steps for learning. Independent work is celebrated and displayed.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- practitioners in the early years provide greater challenge and more effective opportunities for children to exceed the early learning goals in writing
- teachers build on pupils' prior learning and provide a consistent level of challenge
- middle leaders continue to develop their leadership skills in order to have a deeper impact on the quality of teaching and on outcomes for pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Whitcombe
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the senior leaders. I also met with the school business manager and three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I visited lessons in each key stage and reviewed a sample of pupils' workbooks. Together, we looked at learning across the school. I spoke to pupils about their work and their views of the school. I observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime. A range of documents were considered relating to safeguarding. I scrutinised the school development plan, the school's monitoring of its own performance and its assessment of current pupils' progress and attainment. I also analysed pupils' achievement in the 2017 statutory assessments. I reviewed the 16 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I considered 28 responses to the pupil survey and 12 responses to the staff questionnaire. I also scrutinised the school's website.