

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



1 May 2019

Miss Vivien Watson
Headteacher
Hookstone Chase Primary School
Hookstone Chase
Harrogate
North Yorkshire
HG2 7DJ

Dear Miss Watson

Short inspection of Hookstone Chase Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 April 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You joined the school in January this year and have wasted no time in building on the strengths which existed in the school. You already know the school, its pupils and its staff very well. Your evaluations of the school's effectiveness are accurate. This has enabled you to identify appropriate priorities for improvement, which you are working towards with determination.

Your staff team shows a high level of commitment to and passion for providing the best possible educational experiences for pupils. You have introduced systems to ensure that teaching staff take increased responsibility for the progress pupils make. Staff have benefited from professional development in a range of key areas. Most staff are proud to be a part of the school and are supportive of the improvements you are leading.

A caring, inclusive ethos permeates the school. Older pupils are adept in supporting younger pupils. They regularly take part in activities which promote their team work skills and they cooperate well together in lessons and playtimes. Pupils hold a range of leadership positions. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils are trained 'buddies' and are skilled in supporting peers to resolve any difficulties. As a result, pupils are exceptionally polite, mature and welcoming.

You and other leaders benefit from the effective support and challenge which is provided by the governors and the trust. Governors and the chief executive officer share your ambition and high expectations for the school. You have identified,

rightly, that more work is needed to improve the effectiveness of middle leaders. To this end, you have created small teams of leaders for some areas, such as English and mathematics leadership. These middle leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. However, they are at an early stage of their development. Although they have begun to check on the quality of teaching, they remain overly reliant on you and other senior leaders to secure further improvements.

Safeguarding is effective.

Along with your staff team, you have secured an effective culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are clear about their responsibilities in keeping children safe. You work effectively with external agencies and make swift referrals to them where necessary. You and your staff know the pupils very well, and you use this knowledge to tailor support to meet their needs effectively. Your records in respect of child protection are detailed and well maintained.

Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. You and your staff place a heavy emphasis on supporting pupils' emotional development. To this end, a number of pupils attend small groups focused on nurturing pupils to promote their well-being. Pupils who shared their views during the inspection said that they feel safe in school. They appreciate the opportunities available to them to share any worries that they may have. For example, they can write these down and put them in the 'worry box'.

Inspection findings

- You, and your predecessor, have focused on improving pupils' outcomes in mathematics. Teaching staff have benefited from professional development, including that delivered by external experts. This has improved teachers' subject knowledge and, hence, the effectiveness of teaching. Teachers now typically provide clear explanations and ask questions which move pupils' learning on. Teachers' demonstrations are followed by structured opportunities for pupils to discuss and, therefore, consolidate their understanding with a partner. In some classes, pupils are so familiar with this approach that they collaborate with their peers automatically where appropriate. In these classes, pupils think deeply about mathematical concepts and are articulate in explaining their understanding.
- Pupils now have frequent opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics. However, in some year groups teachers do not consistently provide pupils, particularly the most able, with problems and activities which represent sufficient complexity. As a result, although most pupils make good progress, for some pupils this is not maximised. Hence, not enough pupils reach the higher standards of learning.
- Since taking up post, you have continued the work started by your predecessor to improve pupils' learning in reading. You have reviewed the books that teachers choose to teach reading to ensure that these books are of a suitable level of difficulty. You also view these book choices as an opportunity to promote equalities and a vehicle to broaden pupils' vocabulary. As such, teachers employ a range of strategies to support pupils to gather, explore and remember new

words they encounter in their reading.

- Pupils who shared their views during the inspection expressed an enthusiasm for reading. They enjoy choosing books from the library for independent reading. They also say that the books and texts they use in reading lessons often support their learning in other subjects. For example, books such as 'The Polar Bear Explorers' Club' and 'Around the World in Eighty Days' enhanced pupils' learning about explorers in history and geography.
- Pupils' performances to share their learning with parents and the community are an important part of school life and take place regularly. These performances are often linked to pupils' learning in reading. For example, the school was recently involved in a project which involved working with a number of local schools as well as two schools in Nepal. The project was based on a traditional Nepali story and culminated in pupils from each of the schools performing together at the Royal Hall in Harrogate.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and, therefore, pupils develop their early reading skills well. Teaching staff have secure subject knowledge and are consistent in their approach to teaching phonics. This means that pupils develop reliable strategies which help them to sound out unfamiliar words confidently. The books which pupils use to practise their early reading are well matched to their phonics knowledge. As a result, pupils, including lower-attaining pupils, learn to read with fluency. For the last two years, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above or in line with the national average. By the time pupils enter key stage 2, almost all pupils have the phonics skills they need.
- Teaching staff have benefited from recent training which has focused on developing pupils' reading comprehension skills. Across school, including in the early years, pupils now have opportunities to develop reading skills, such as inference. As a result, pupils show an increasing understanding of the different ways an author can express meaning and influence the reader. In some year groups, teachers are skilled in asking pupils questions which require them to think deeply about their reading. However, this practice is still embedding in some year groups and is not fully effective. This is evident in some teachers' acceptance of pupils' underdeveloped answers to questions. This means that, in some year groups, not enough pupils reach and exceed the standard expected for their age.
- You have focused considerable attention on the educational experiences and outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. You recognise that, although disadvantaged pupils often make good progress by the end of key stage 2, this progress is not maximised across the school. Consequently, too few disadvantaged pupils reach the higher standards of learning. A number of strategies are in place to support pupils' emotional and social development. You are checking thoroughly on the difference these strategies make to pupils. You have introduced effective systems to ensure that staff identify pupils' barriers to learning accurately. You have also ensured that teachers, as well as you, check regularly on disadvantaged pupils' performance, including their attendance, outcomes and involvement in extra-curricular activities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils, particularly the most able, are given reasoning and problem-solving activities in mathematics which represent a suitable level of challenge and complexity
- all teachers have high expectations of pupils' reading comprehension work and require pupils to give detailed, accurate responses
- middle leaders receive professional development so that they can take responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in the subjects they lead.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer, 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

Karine Hendley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, middle leaders, the chief executive officer of the trust and two governors, including the chair of the governing body (who is also the chair of the trustees). I observed teaching and learning with you in classes across the school. I scrutinised pupils' work alongside you and middle leaders, and I listened to pupils read. I spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, and observed their behaviour around the school, including at breakfast club, after-school club, playtime and lunchtime. I reviewed school documentation including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, as well as information about pupils' progress, attainment, behaviour and attendance.

I took account of the nine responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. I met with parents at the start of the day and took account of the 38 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 27 free-text responses. I spoke with staff during the inspection and considered the two responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

On the day of the inspection, most of the Year 6 pupils were on a residential trip, accompanied by the interim deputy headteacher and a number of other teaching staff. In addition, four teachers, some of whom hold senior and middle leadership positions, were absent from school.