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Miss C Styles
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Styles

Short inspection of Croftlands Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 3 May 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 December 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 have successfully led the school through a number of changes and you are now looking forward to the planned new school building. You have created a school that is welcoming and inclusive. Staff are friendly and approachable. Pupils are polite, courteous and their behaviour is exemplary. All parents who responded to Parent View said they would recommend the school to others. You and your staff are ambitious for all learners. You focus on the individual needs of the child. If a pupil is not learning, staff amend their teaching accordingly. This lives up to the Croftlands Junior School ethos of 'every member of the school community is valued and appreciated and... everyone can realise their own potential'.

Leaders and governors are passionate about pupils' wider development. This is evident in the breadth of the curriculum you provide and the range of clubs and activities that extend beyond the school day. For example, pupils enjoy guitar club, chess club, walking groups and a range of sporting activities. Your staff embrace and are supported by the local community which enhances pupils' learning. As a result, pupils make strong progress in subjects across the wider curriculum, such as science, history, religious education and art.

At the previous inspection, the inspector reported that improvements were required in pupils' writing. You have successfully addressed these points. You have developed what the school offers, creating opportunities for pupils to write across

the curriculum. Training for teachers has enabled them to teach writing more effectively. You changed how pupils record their work so that they maintain the same writing standards in other subjects as in English. You have developed what happens when pupils move from the infant school to have an accurate understanding of pupils' attainment in writing when they join the school. Since the last inspection, there has been a change in the content of the national curriculum and in standards. This means that writing continues to be an area of development, especially for boys.

You have an accurate understanding of your school's effectiveness. You use information well to identify any areas for improvement. Your improvement plans are detailed and focus on the correct areas. However, plans do not include clear outcomes of what success will look like. This makes it difficult for leaders and governors to understand the impact of your actions on learners.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils are systematic and that detailed records are kept. You and your staff are thorough in following up any concerns you have for pupils' well-being. Staff receive regular training to ensure that they are up to date with current requirements. You make parents aware of safeguarding issues relating to social media at parents' evenings and through newsletters. Governors are aware of their responsibilities. They are forward-thinking, for example when considering the potential safeguarding issues that the process of the new build will create.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe as part of the curriculum. Those I spoke to, and those responding to the Ofsted questionnaire, said that they felt safe. You and your staff deal with the rare cases of bullying effectively. All parents who responded to Parent View and those I spoke to during the inspection said that their child was happy and safe at school.

Inspection findings

- Mathematics is a strength of the school. You have provided training in the new mathematics curriculum, which has improved teachers' confidence and subject knowledge. Teachers ask effective questions to enable pupils to develop their verbal reasoning skills to solve problems. Teachers move pupils' learning on quickly. You teach the most able pupils from the neighbouring infant school to ensure an effective transition into Year 3. Your effective provision in mathematics results in pupils making strong progress. This is evident in the progress I saw in pupils' books and the assessment information you shared with me. In 2016, Year 6 pupils made strong progress in mathematics compared with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils' outcomes in writing were below national expectations last year but you responded quickly to identify the reasons why. Teachers attended training that helped them to understand the new writing standards more clearly. They compare pupils' writing with 12 other local schools to help ensure that their judgements of pupils' writing are accurate. Teachers provide pupils with effective

strategies to improve their spelling. Work in pupils' books shows that they are making strong progress with their spelling over time. The new system to check on pupils' learning shows that most current pupils are making good progress in writing. Such progress was also evident in the writing I observed in pupils' books. However, you have identified a group of boys who are making slower progress in writing. You are currently developing the curriculum to motivate and engage boys, particularly in reading and writing. For example, a new initiative teams up local rugby players and 'reluctant readers' to read and do sports activities together. Pupils enjoy this activity, but it is too early to see the impact of this on boys' reading and writing progress.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Senior leaders seek advice when necessary to improve provision to overcome any barriers to learning. You use funding wisely to support individual pupils. You monitor pupils' progress well at an individual level but do not always employ the same rigour when considering these pupils as a group.
- Leaders place great importance on pupils' regular attendance at school. You reward pupils for regular attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance has been broadly in line with the national average for the last few years. You have employed an education welfare officer to support pupils and their families who find it difficult to attend school regularly. This has a positive effect on improving persistent absence. However, attendance continues to be a priority as there is still a small number of disadvantaged boys who do not attend as regularly as they should.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans for improvement have more measurable outcomes so the impact of actions can be more easily evaluated
- further curriculum development engages and motivates boys to write and attend school regularly so they make more accelerated progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Jean Robinson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and with the assistant headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator and the literacy coordinator. I held a meeting with the chair of governors and three other members of the governing body. I also spoke to a representative from the local authority. I considered the 19 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, as well as 19 additional written responses from parents. The results of the 97 responses to the Ofsted pupil questionnaire were also considered. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I toured the school with you and scrutinised pupils' work in their books. I also spoke to pupils informally.

I examined a wide range of school documents relating to improvement planning, self-evaluation, governance, attendance, pupils' outcomes and safeguarding.