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Mrs Debbie Secker
Richmond Hill Primary Academy
Melton Road
Sprotbrough
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
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Dear Mrs Secker

Short inspection of Richmond Hill Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 17 January 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 your predecessor 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 determination and passion of the chief executive officer and chair of the governing body, combined with open and honest dialogue between leaders and governors, have been a central tenet of school improvement. Together, you have been determined that pupils have the very best learning experiences. Pupils, parents and carers value the many and varied opportunities they have to listen to speakers and visit theatres, museums and historic sites.

You and the chief executive officer have deployed vision, good-quality staff training and patience in equal measure to develop a securely good teaching force. This has been underpinned by a clear cycle of evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching. This approach has delivered consistency in the quality of teaching so that, over time, all teaching is delivering good outcomes for pupils. You have provided regular training for all staff, precisely focused on areas that you have identified as needing to improve. The chief executive officer has been steadfast in her resolve to develop leadership capacity within the school. In turn, this has led to a capable and efficient leadership team which is able to support the monitoring process and help teachers to improve.

Leaders have worked with determination to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics. You have sourced funding to implement an effective method of teaching that ensures that no child is left behind. Pupils have frequent opportunities, through daily 'maths meetings', to improve their mental mathematics

skills. Pupils' books show that their teachers carefully plan and deliver sequences of lessons that build incrementally on pupils' understanding. Leaders' monitoring shows that teachers provide appropriate resources to help pupils to rapidly acquire the understanding they need. These actions have ensured that the majority of pupils' learning in mathematics is secure in all classes in school.

Leaders have introduced a raft of measures to improve behaviour across the school. Pupils enjoy working towards 'perfect purple' in recognition of always doing the right thing. You and your staff have developed a very consistent approach, strengthening the high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Consequently, your school is a calm and studious place. Effective strategies employed by all staff, well supported by the inclusion manager, ensure that pupils who struggle to exert self-discipline are helped to do so. Detailed tracking shows that 98% of pupils maintain good or excellent behaviour at all times and the incidents of poor behaviour are swiftly diminishing.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured robust systems for ensuring that pupils are safe within school. Governors regularly check centrally held records to ensure that they comply with legislation. The school's approach to protecting pupils against radical views is very effective. Dedicated lessons and assemblies reinforce messages to pupils about how to keep safe when using the internet. The school makes good use of external agencies, such as the police, to help deliver lessons that support pupils to stay safe.

Inspection findings

- You and your leadership team have put into place rigorous systems for tracking the attainment of pupils. Teachers are able to identify where pupils are not making secure progress and quickly put into place appropriate provision to enable pupils to catch up. This strategy is proving effective in most classes in school but it is unclear how effective this has been thus far for some pupils with low prior attainment.
- Standards are high. In key stage 2, pupils' attainment was above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics in 2015 and 2016. Pupils made progress broadly in line with that seen nationally.
- In key stage 1, pupils also attained levels above national averages, but in reading and mathematics they did not attain the higher levels they might be expected to, given their starting points. Evidence from the school's tracking data suggests that this pattern will not continue in 2017 because almost all middle- and high-prior-attaining pupils are on course to make the progress they should.
- There has been an improving picture in pupils' phonics skills over time and outcomes have been above the national average for the last two years.
- Teachers' questioning is successfully developing pupils' confidence in participating and further developing their knowledge. They plan sequences of lessons that underpin successful learning, particularly in mathematics.

- Due to the implementation of new methods for teaching reading, pupils' learning in reading is now very effective. Pupils successfully use their knowledge of phonics to read previously unseen words. Staff probe pupils' understanding well, so that they apply their inference and deduction skills appropriately to challenging texts.
- Work in pupils' books shows that approaches to teaching writing are effective. Pupils are productive and write well. They are successfully encouraged to develop their writing through events such as the upcoming 750-word story competition, poetry competition and spelling bee.
- Leaders have developed a highly effective approach to improving pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. This has resulted in extremely consistent behaviour across the school. Pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes and playtimes is relaxed and happy. Pupils spoke warmly about the frequent opportunities they are given to develop their skills in many areas beyond reading, writing and mathematics. A particular source of joy is the school choir. Pupils spoke animatedly about their enjoyment of singing together and their success in singing competitions.
- Leaders carefully monitor the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers are regularly held to account for the progress of all pupils in their class, including those with low prior attainment or particular needs. Teachers adopt a diagnostic approach, analysing gaps in pupils' understanding and ensuring that pupils receive appropriate teaching and support to help them grasp new learning. Assessment information shows that this group of pupils are making secure progress but they continue to work at levels below those expected for their age.
- Leaders are successfully supporting vulnerable pupils to attend school regularly. As a result, the attendance of pupils overall is above national averages and that of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much improved.
- Children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge slightly below those typically seen for their age. They make steady progress throughout the setting so that, by the time they move key stages, above-average proportions of children are ready to start in Year 1. Teaching is effective in supporting children to develop knowledge and understanding in number and to develop their use of language. However, opportunities for children to apply and practise the skills and knowledge they are acquiring independently are not well resourced or planned with sufficient rigour.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- greater opportunities and precise teaching are provided for low-prior-attaining pupils to ensure that they make more rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics
- provision in the early years is improved so that activities, both indoors and

outdoors, fully develop children's learning and independence in all of the early learning goals.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection I was able to discuss the work of the school with you and your senior leaders. We visited classrooms together to observe teaching and learning. I was able to look at pupils' work in books and to speak with pupils throughout the day. I heard pupils read. Discussions with the chief executive officer, the inclusion team and three members of the governing body helped to provide me with additional information. School documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website were also taken into account. I looked at letters from parents and the online questionnaire (Parent View) to gather 48 parents' views about the school. I also took into account the views of 11 staff through Ofsted's online questionnaire. My main areas of focus during the inspection included checking what leaders have done to improve the quality of teaching across the school and to raise pupils' attainment in mathematics, the effectiveness of behaviour management and the amount of progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.