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Mrs Heather Harris
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Harris

Short inspection of Crowton Christ Church CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 December 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since the last inspection, the school has gone from strength to strength. You and the governing body have a deep and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You carry out detailed analyses of pupils' performance to identify any patterns and trends. This helps you take effective actions to improve the school.

This is a vibrant, happy school at the heart of its community. You go the extra mile to help each and every pupil to flourish. At whatever stage pupils join your school, you make sure you get to know the pupils and their families well. This helps new pupils settle quickly and make a success of their time at Crowton Christ Church. Your parents recommend your school wholeheartedly. As one parent summed up about her children: 'They always want to go to school, they enter the classroom with a smile in the morning and leave school happy at the end of the day.'

Pupils love their friendly, welcoming and happy school. This is a school where pupils take care of each other, play and work well together and where every pupil can flourish. During the inspection, older pupils delighted in the youngest class's performance of 'Whoops-a-Daisy Angel', their Christmas play. Your youngest pupils danced, sang and recited their lines confidently and proudly, in front of the rest of the school. Displays in classrooms and around the school celebrate pupils'

achievements, including paintings, pieces of writing and sporting trophies. Pupils and staff are proud to be a part of Crowton Christ Church.

Since the previous inspection, you have taken effective actions to address the weaknesses in teaching identified by the inspector, particularly in Years 3 and 4. You have helped teachers to make better use of questioning, set more challenging work and ensure that pupils pay heed to their teachers' advice.

Since the previous inspection leaders have sustained pupils' love of reading. Pupils talk articulately about their favourite authors and genres. The most able readers tackle challenging modern fiction, as well as classic literature, enthusiastically. You recognise the need to increase the range of texts available for pupils, particularly the most able, and are raising money to replenish your school library. Teachers plan a wealth of opportunities for pupils to write at length, edit and redraft work. This is helping pupils across the school to produce writing of a much higher quality than previously.

Your teachers help pupils to develop their resilience to failure. Pupils are willing to have a go and learn from their mistakes now, which is helping them to be more successful learners. Pupils clamour to answer their teachers' thoughtful questions, which check their understanding as well as moving their learning on.

As a result of your actions since the previous inspection, standards in reading, writing and mathematics across school have improved. You have not shied away from challenging conversations with staff when their performance has fallen short of your high standards. Your teachers appreciate the time you take to provide them with positive feedback following work scrutinies, lesson observations and learning walks. However, they are keen for more individual advice about how they can improve their classroom practice further.

Quite rightly, you have focused on raising standards in reading, writing, mathematics, computing and physical education. As we discussed, the time has come to extend the rigour of your English and mathematics curriculum design to science, humanities and the arts. Your current curriculum plans for these subjects need further development so that pupils build on their previous knowledge and skills. For example, pupils talked to me about how they struggled to label maps in geography and identify different food groups in science as they did not have the knowledge required to complete the tasks.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils and their parents agree that pupils are well cared for and safe. This is a school which knows its children and their families extremely well. You and your staff are quick to identify any concerns. You ensure that pupils and their families receive the support and help they need. Pupils are confident that they would talk to an adult in school if they were worried about anything. Pupils are certain any very rare incidents of bullying would be dealt with effectively by staff. You liaise well with other agencies and seek advice and guidance as appropriate.

Inspection findings

- Pupils are present, polite, kind and caring. Pupils play football, chat and enjoy the sensory garden happily together at break and lunch times. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers, follow instructions first time and are committed to improving their work. Consequently, no learning time is wasted. Almost all children are on time every day. You ensure that families who struggle to get their children to school are given the help and support they need to improve their children's' attendance.
- You and your governors took decisive action to reverse the decline in mathematics in 2016. Training and support has ensured that staff are delivering the new mathematics scheme of work with increasing confidence. Pupils report, and their work in books confirms, that mathematics makes them 'think hard' now. Pupils are developing fluency, grappling with tricky problems and explaining their reasoning. As a result, standards continue to rise so that you are eliminating the legacy of underperformance.
- The governing body have 'stepped up to the mark'. The governing body have made sure that they have further developed their skills and knowledge to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. Governors use their routine visits to school to carry out thorough checks so that they have a deep understanding of the schools' performance. Governors balance challenge and support to you judiciously. Governors have high ambition and expectations for each and every member of the school community. As a result, governors play a pivotal role in the school's improvement.
- You make sure that at Crowton Christ Church, staff keep up date with developments in education. Leaders, staff and pupils benefit from your collaboration with other local schools. You encourage your staff to try out their ideas, if you think they will benefit the pupils. Staff appreciate your willingness to listen to them and let them take risks. You make sure that your door is always open and staff feel well supported by you, both personally and professionally. Consequently, staff morale is high.
- You and the governors seek ways to improve the school continually, so it can serve its community as well as possible. Recently, governors asked parents for their views on homework. This feedback helped governors refine and improve the school's homework policy. Consequently, parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire are more positive about the homework their children receive now.
- Although the school is small, leaders make sure that pupils benefit from a range of opportunities beyond the classroom. For example, many pupils learn how to play musical instruments, take part in after-school clubs and enjoy learning about their local area through trips and visits. Your oldest pupils were eager to tell me about their memorable residential trip to the Conway Centre, Anglesey. Your pupil road safety officers make sure other pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the way to and from school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should further improve the school's curriculum so that pupils build on previous learning in the arts, humanities and sciences.

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

Yours sincerely

Pippa Jackson Maitland
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- The inspector met with senior leaders, teaching and support staff. The inspector met with the chair, vice-chair and members of the governing body.
- The inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector considered the 33 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspector talked to parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspector met formally with a group of staff and considered the 11 responses to Ofsted's online survey of staff.
- The inspector talked informally to pupils throughout the school day, considered the 84 responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils as well as results of the school's own survey.
- The inspector visited classrooms and checked on pupils' work, both in books and on wall displays.
- The inspector looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment, the school's self-evaluation and action plan as well as a range of other documentation.
- The inspector conducted a review of safeguarding, including an evaluation of the school's policies and procedures to keep pupils safe, recruitment checks and record keeping.