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Mr John Coles
Headteacher
Heron Primary School
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Dear Mr Coles

Short inspection of Heron Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 October 2015 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 May 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

- Your leadership as headteacher is inspirational. You lead a team who share your commitment to providing the very best education for pupils.
- Leaders at every level work effectively. Together, you have continued to build on the strengths and have successfully tackled those areas identified as needing improvement at the last inspection.
- You and your colleagues ensure that pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils value the feedback provided and describe how this has improved their learning.
- You rightly consider the training and development of staff as integral to the success of the school. Teachers appreciate the opportunity to develop their skills through high-quality training and the sharing of good practice. This ensures that teaching is consistently effective in securing good progress by pupils.
- Leaders have developed a curriculum that excites, inspires and motivates pupils to learn. Consequently, pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well.
- Pupils feel safe and secure. They talk positively about the care and guidance they are given in their school work. As a result, they are happy to come to school. This is reflected in their regular attendance.

Safeguarding is effective.

You consider the safeguarding of pupils to be of paramount importance, and ensure this is the case. Robust systems are rigorously implemented. There is a strong culture of safety and security within the school. You, your staff and governors receive excellent safeguarding training to keep well informed on all types of risk to children. Procedures are comprehensive and staff follow them with precision when needed. You meticulously monitor pupils identified as 'at risk'. The school is tenacious in following up any concerns and works effectively with outside agencies to keep pupils safe.

Pupils are confident they can share any worries they may have with an adult. They comment that their school is a safe place, where they are well cared for.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- Staff, pupils and parents are full of praise for how you lead the school. Your determination that pupils should have the opportunity to achieve the best is unwavering. The strengths identified at the previous inspection remain.
- During the academic year 2013/2014, you and your senior leaders recognised that children in the early years were not doing as well as they could. During the last school year you quickly tackled this area of concern. Consequently, improvements in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development this year have risen significantly. The outside learning environment for children in the early years requires improvement so that children learn equally well across all areas of learning.
- Your self-evaluation accurately identifies the areas in which the school needs to improve. In particular, you and your leaders recognise that the progress of the most-able pupils, in particular those who are disadvantaged, needs to be stronger in reading and mathematics. The evidence of this visit is that staff are taking effective action to bring about these improvements rapidly. There are early indications of these pupils making better progress in reading and writing since the beginning of the year at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- You have a strong teaching team. They are committed and strive to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can. Pupils explained how they appreciate the dedication of their teachers and their determination to provide them with lifelong skills and a passion for learning.
- The way you involve pupils in the production of the curriculum ensures that they are excited and motivated about their learning. They relish the learning opportunities and challenges they experience. For example, 'Wow' days are well received. Pupils described the excitement of the re-enactment of the battle between the Romans and the Celts, bringing their learning alive.

- You are pivotal in developing the leadership skills of teachers. Senior and middle leaders are knowledgeable about the subjects they lead and are confident in providing guidance to their colleagues. They appreciate the high-quality training they receive. This gives them the necessary skills to carry out their responsibilities to good effect. They welcome the regular opportunity to share good practice with each other and teachers in the local cluster of schools. As a result, teaching is effective in securing consistently good progress, including for those pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- Pupils describe how teachers give them effective guidance in how they can improve their work. They welcome the time they are given to respond to the guidance given. As a result, they make better progress. Pupils acknowledge how teachers provide equality of opportunity, ensuring equal access to all the opportunities the school has to offer.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They are appreciative of the hard work and dedication you and your team provide. This ensures their children receive the best learning opportunities. Parents describe how the school prepares their children well for the future, providing them with the necessary skills and confidence to become lifelong learners.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that they:

- increase the level of challenge for the most-able pupils, specifically disadvantaged pupils, in reading and mathematics
- improve the outdoor environment in the early years so that children learn equally well across all areas of learning.

Yours sincerely

Jen Southall

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, senior leaders, governors and an officer from the local authority to discuss the improvements the school has made since the last inspection and pupils' progress. Together, you and I visited lessons to observe teaching and to look at pupils' work. I spoke with parents at the start of the day and looked at the survey results from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also spoke to a group of pupils. I evaluated the accuracy of your self-evaluation along with other documentation. I checked the effectiveness of your safeguarding arrangements and your work to ensure the regular attendance of your pupils.