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Miss Alison Barnes  
Hadfield Infant School  
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Dear Miss Barnes

### **Short inspection of Hadfield Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 May 2016, 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 March 2011.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since arriving at the school in January 2016 as the new headteacher, you have built on the strengths already evident at the school. You, very quickly, gained an accurate picture of what the school does well and what needed to be in place to improve the chances that outcomes for pupils increase from those achieved last year. You have raised further the expectations for all staff and you show no complacency in your approach to any aspect of school improvement. You have been rigorous in insisting that teachers move pupils' learning on briskly, so pupils' progress is consistently good.

At the last inspection, inspectors commended the school for its outstanding curriculum and the way that all aspects were held in high regard by parents. Those strengths have been maintained. The exciting curriculum, based on themes such as 'pirates' and 'space', is supplemented by many clubs and activities that pupils enjoy. In particular, the woodland wizards forest school continues to give pupils invaluable opportunities to learn outdoors, develop independence and experience the wonder of nature.

In 2011, inspectors recommended that teachers improved the way that they checked on pupils' progress, as well as ensuring that they supported pupils who needed to catch up. An effective team of middle leaders is checking that good and improving teaching is taking place. Teachers are assessing pupils' progress regularly and are setting the pupils challenging work. Pupils are learning well, as a result, and teachers are supporting well those pupils whose skills are not yet secure.

Middle leaders model your ambitions for the school and, like you, are visiting classrooms, looking at pupils' work and talking with pupils to ensure that no pupil is left behind. In 2011, inspectors also recommended that leaders evaluate whether the then newly begun support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability was proving effective in building on these pupils' good progress. The current leader for this area is highly organised. She, continually, makes sure that the support these pupils receive is helping them to make good progress from their starting points. Her 'pupil-centred annual reviews' are particularly effective in involving both the pupils concerned and their parents.

As a result of your good leadership, the clear direction you set, and the high standards you insist on, your staff are dedicated, hard working and united. All staff who responded to the Ofsted survey gave very positive responses, confirming that the school had continued to improve and that they were proud to work there. Parents continue to express their strong support for the school. One parent summed up the views of others by saying, 'My child is safe and thriving at the school. The teachers go "above and beyond" to help. The staff are very nurturing and are excellent role models.'

Governors are effective in holding you and your staff to account. They have a precise understanding of the priorities of the school. You have begun to accelerate the progress of improvements by making the school development plan more concise than the previous one and by concentrating on the main priorities for school improvement. However, the plan is still not sufficiently effective. This is because the dates when actions are planned to happen are vague and the ways of evaluating the impact of the actions are not precise enough. As a result, governors are not easily able to check on the impact of the changes that staff make.

You are very aware that the proportion of Year 1 pupils who have passed the phonics screening check has declined in the past two years and that, in 2015, Year 2 pupils did not attain as highly as in previous years. The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others widened in part because of this. You, immediately, checked on the reasons for these matters and put in place effective strategies to improve the pupils' achievement. The strategies are ensuring that pupils are currently achieving much more highly than they did last year.

Though most disadvantaged pupils are now making as much, or more, progress than others in the school, you are aware that a few are not yet making the gains they need to succeed. During my visit, I looked at a selection of work from pupils of different abilities. This confirms that pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Not all pupils, however, complete their work neatly. Some of the pupils' work that I saw was not neatly set out on the page and looked too messy. This was because teachers do not insist that all pupils complete their work with sufficient pride.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors place a high priority on the safeguarding of pupils. For example, because building contractors have not yet installed a small piece of fencing in the outdoor area used by the Reception class, you have completed a risk assessment and stationed a member of staff there at all times when children are present. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, unanimously, believe that their children feel safe in school. Pupils I met during my visit confirmed this, saying that any member of staff would help them, if ever they were worried, or upset. Pupils are taught how to keep safe from things such as hazards on roads, strangers and when using computers.

You have ensured that staff and all regular visitors to the school receive safeguarding training. Staff that I met could describe the warning signs that could suggest that a pupil might be being harmed and knew that they must report any concerns that they have immediately. Leaders and governors ensure that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, and recording and reporting procedures are well organised. You believe that, whenever needed, it is vital that you make referrals to external agencies, in order to minimise the risk of harm to pupils.

## **Inspection findings**

- You and governors have correctly identified the school as good and have a precise idea about what is needed to improve it further. As headteacher, you have wasted no time in ensuring that, while you sustain the many strengths of the school, you, quickly, deal with the areas that require attention.
- You have improved the quality of teaching and, as a result, pupils' progress is accelerating.
- You have introduced a new tracking system to ensure that all pupils are making good gains and that staff are fully accountable for the outcomes of their pupils. Staff are united and are proud to do their job. As one who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire explained, 'I feel privileged to work at Hadfield Infant School.'
- Governors are insistent that all pupils must make good progress and achieve as highly as possible. For example, they are unafraid to take difficult decisions not to award a pay rise, if teachers' classroom performance is not good enough to justify it. Governors agree that earlier action should have occurred to address the decline in results in phonics. However, they have learned from this and, now that pupils' outcomes are improving, they are determined not to let standards slip again. They ask challenging questions of the headteacher and other senior leaders in order to hold them to account and to ensure that pupils succeed.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics are effective in supporting you to drive the school upwards and achieve the best for pupils. They check on the quality of teaching and regularly measure how much pupils are learning.

- In addition, they provide good support for colleagues and ensure that staff are skilled in delivering high-quality lessons. They pass on regular reports to you and governors in order to keep you informed. Subject leaders check rigorously the assessments that teachers have made of their pupils' progress by repeatedly moderating them with the local authority and with other schools.
- As well as producing a valuable longer-term strategy to improve the school further, you have refined the current school development plan to make it a more tightly focused document. Governors say that this has helped them to fulfil their strategic role, by enabling them to see the important priorities more easily.
- The actions in this plan are sensible and fixed on improving pupils' outcomes where they were weaker last year. However, the plan is not as effective as it needs to be because many of the timescales are too vague. In addition, staff have not ensured that the criteria for measuring how successful the actions are are always precise. As a result, you and the governors cannot evaluate the impact of new initiatives effectively.
- The effective teaching that pupils receive begins in the Reception year, where children get off to a good start. The safe, happy environment encourages children to explore and learn new things.
- During my visit, I saw pupils cooperating to make bridges and challenge courses, and others excited to write their names with a quill pen.
- Adults' good relationships with children mean that children become confident to get involved by 'having a go' and, for example, to predict what will happen in a story they are reading together.
- Good teaching continues in key stage 1, where pupils are given more challenging work to make them think. I saw pupils in Year 1 learning how to compare the weight of shopping items using scales and understanding how an object is not automatically heavier, just because it is much larger than another one.
- Teachers ask good questions in lessons to check that pupils have learned what they need to.
- The proportion of pupils who passed the phonics screening check in Year 1 has declined from 2013 and last year it was below the national average. This was because, in the past, teachers were not ensuring that pupils were learning sufficiently quickly to cover the range of phonics needed. In some cases, intervention for pupils was not effective enough.
- Middle leaders are helping you to ensure that teachers' planning and delivery is now accelerating pupils' phonics skills. Better assessment, precise teaching of phonics and a wide range of new, additional support means that the proportion passing this year is set to rise considerably to around the current national average.
- You noted that, after three years in which results in Year 2 were well above national averages, they fell last year and were below the national average, largely due to pupils' lower attainment in writing. The gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 also widened. The pupils in this cohort had entered the school in 2012 with levels of skills that were much lower than those typically found in children of the same age. Though they made good

progress from their starting points, they did not achieve as well as other pupils nationally by the time they left Year 2.

- You are insistent, however, that attainment must rise this year so that pupils leave well prepared for junior school. You have, therefore, checked that effective teaching is taking place and information you provided during my visit shows that most pupils are on track to achieve at least the standards expected for their age.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is also accelerating, from lower starting points. Though, overall, disadvantaged pupils are now making progress which is at least as good or better than other pupils in the school, a small minority are not making the gains they need to in order to catch up.
- During my visit, I viewed a wide selection of books from pupils of different abilities. The books confirm that pupils are making good progress.
- Pupils show increasing confidence in mathematics and are able to answer questions with greater accuracy in a widening variety of areas.
- Skills in writing are also improving, with pupils able to write in different ways, with better spelling and punctuation, as they grow older.
- Pupils with whom I met during my visit said that they enjoy their lessons and that teachers make them fun. They were keen to tell me that grown-ups at the school will help them if they do not understand something, and that the most-able pupils are given more difficult work to do.
- Pupils say that they like keeping healthy and enjoy the wide range of clubs and activities on offer. These include singing, Spanish, dance, gardening, and information and communications technology.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Weekly activities, such as assemblies by members of the local church, visits to the woodlands wizards forest school for all pupils, and regular opportunities in lessons make pupils reflective, thoughtful and polite.
- Pupils also develop fundamental British values and know that it is important to be well behaved and to follow the school rules. They learn to be respectful of others. Pupils with whom I met told me how they welcome new pupils into the school from other countries and how it is a wonderful thing that everyone is different.
- Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. However, last year, leaders noted that the proportion of those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals who were persistently absent was slightly higher than the national average. Leaders reacted quickly to work with the parents of the pupils concerned to address this successfully. Persistent absence is now considerably below the current national average.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the school development plan is improved, so that they can evaluate the impact of new actions, by making it clear when these should take place and precisely how they should be measured

- the remaining gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others close quickly
- teachers insist that all pupils set out their work neatly.

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

Yours sincerely

**Roary Pownall**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, representatives of the governing body, teachers at the school, and the leader for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. I also met with a representative of the local authority. We visited all year groups to observe teaching and learning and undertook a detailed sample of pupils' work. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and met with a class of Year 2 pupils at breaktime. I considered the views of 11 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, alongside the large number of parents who responded to the school's recent questionnaire. I read a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, your school development plan, and information about outcomes for pupils currently in the school. I visited the breakfast club, which is maintained by the governing body, to check that pupils were safe. I studied information related to attendance, anonymised information about the performance management of the staff, and examined safeguarding records and policies. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information. I looked at the range of views expressed by staff, through Ofsted's questionnaire, about the school and its leadership.