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Dear Ms Huntington

Short inspection of Honeybourne First School Academy

Following my visit to the school on 14 June 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in June 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 inspection of the predecessor school, you have been resolute in making sure that all staff share the same high expectations for pupils that you have. Two teachers have left the school and three new staff have been appointed. These appointments have helped to further strengthen the quality of teaching in school and have led to improvements in pupils' outcomes. You closely monitor the quality of teaching and have put in place strong links between the impact that teaching has on pupils' outcomes and teachers' pay progression.

You have created a team of staff who are united in their work to ensure that pupils thrive and achieve high standards in all areas of school life. All members of staff who completed the staff questionnaire were positive about all aspects of the school's work. In this small school, teachers often have responsibility for several subjects and they fulfil these roles efficiently and conscientiously. They also give freely of their time to provide extra-curricular activities for the pupils, such as football, choir and science clubs. These additional activities are greatly appreciated by the pupils and contribute to their positive view of the school.

Governors took the decision to take over responsibility for the on-site nursery in 2013 and this has helped to ensure that there is continuity of practice across early years. You also, together with governors, took the decision to put in place an

additional class in key stage 1 from September 2015. This has meant that pupils are now taught in smaller groups and has allowed for greater individual support for all pupils. This has been particularly successful in helping disadvantaged pupils to make better progress and to narrow any gaps in their outcomes compared with other pupils in school and other pupils nationally.

Honeybourne First School Academy is at the heart of the local community and is valued by pupils, parents and residents of the village. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously both for their school and the area they live in. An example of this was the recent litter pick that the pupils undertook in the streets around the school. Pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes to learning, are caring and considerate and are extremely well behaved. They are developing as positive citizens of this country and show respect and tolerance for other people. While you and other members of staff have been successful in ensuring that pupils demonstrate an understanding of fundamental British values through their attitudes and behaviour, planning for promotion of these values in the curriculum is not always explicit enough and, as a result, opportunities to promote this aspect of their learning are not always taken.

By the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 5, they achieve high standards in all subjects. I saw evidence of this during the inspection in the quality of the work in pupils' books. This was particularly apparent in the quality of pupils' writing, which has been a recent area for development. Teachers insist on high standards in punctuation, spelling and the use of grammar and provide regular opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces of work about a wide range of interesting subjects. During the inspection, children in the Reception class were encouraged to use their phonics (the sounds that letters make in words) knowledge to accurately spell increasingly difficult words. Pupils in Year 1 were accurate in their spelling of the days of the week and the months of the year.

This year, you have introduced a new system of assessing pupils' outcomes and have worked with other local schools to ensure that teachers' assessments of how pupils are achieving are accurate. You have taken advice from other school leaders and external educational consultants on what approaches to assessment are particularly effective. This has helped teachers to have a clear view of the progress that their pupils are making and to then set individual targets for each pupil on what they need to achieve next. This is linked to high-quality teacher feedback through marking that is informative, acknowledges progress and clearly identifies what each pupil needs to do to improve further. However, the assessment system is not yet fully refined to allow you and other leaders to quickly identify if any individual pupils, or groups of pupils, are in danger of falling behind in any area of their learning.

Governors are highly supportive of the school. They make regular visits to the school and have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. They make good use of the information that you provide through regular, detailed reports to monitor the progress of the pupils. While they use external information to compare the progress of pupils against other schools, they do not yet make full use of all the information that is available to them.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that there is effective practice in place to protect pupils and to keep them safe. You have put in place thorough procedures when staff are appointed to the school to check their suitability to work with children. As soon as they start at the school, staff receive training in safeguarding. All staff employed by the school are regularly provided with updates on aspects of safeguarding. For example, at the beginning of this year, you led training for staff on their duty to protect pupils from the threat of radicalisation and extremism. The school's safeguarding policy has been recently updated to make sure it meets all current legislation and is now available to parents on the website.

All the parents that I spoke to during the inspection and who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, expressed extremely high levels of confidence in the work that you, and the staff, do to keep their children safe. One parent commented that 'Honeybourne has created an ethos where pupils feel valued and nurtured. The school has a real community spirit and, above all else, our children come home happy every day and are, therefore, flourishing in their learning,' This was typical of the views of parents who recognise the care and support that is shown towards their children.

Pupils say that they feel secure in school. They have a very good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when using the internet. They know that their use of the internet is monitored in school by you and other members of staff and appreciate that this is for their protection. They speak positively of the 'walking bus' that is run to help them walk safely to school.

Inspection findings

- Governors are supportive and provide challenge to school leaders. They have a good understanding of the strengths of the school but also are perceptive in recognising when and where further improvements can be made to enable pupils to make even better progress. An example of this was the decision to establish an additional class in September 2015 in key stage 1 so that all pupils could be taught in smaller, single-age classes. This was in response to the dip in attainment that had occurred in Year 2 in the previous two years. School assessment information and scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection indicates that outcomes are now improving for pupils across key stage 1 and they are making much more rapid progress. I discussed with governors how they could make further use of external information about the school's performance to ask even more challenging questions of you and other leaders.
- Teachers are effective in providing pupils with work that is challenging and engaging. They adapt tasks well to the different ages and abilities within the classes and are skilled at providing appropriately high levels of challenge for the most able pupils. This is helping to ensure that all pupils achieve outcomes that are at least in line with, and often above, those expected for

their age by the time they leave the school. This means that pupils are well equipped to start at the middle schools when they leave in Year 5. The school is opening an additional Year 6 class in September 2016 so that pupils will be able to remain at Honeybourne First School Academy until the end of their primary education.

- Pupils have access to a broad, balanced and exciting curriculum. During the inspection, I observed a class of pupils who were captivated by the activities in a modern foreign languages lesson. They used their developing knowledge of the language to identify objects, sing a song and answer the teacher's questions in French. Pupils also benefit from, and appreciate, the range of trips and visits they take part in that support their learning across the curriculum.
- Your monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning within the school is thorough and accurate. During the joint visits that you and I made to the classes during the inspection, you were perceptive about the impact that teaching was having on pupils' learning. Your detailed knowledge of each child in the school helps you to judge whether the level of challenge and support is appropriate for each individual's needs.
- The school improvement plan is thorough, well thought through and focuses on areas where the school can improve further. In the current academic year, you have identified that you need to further improve parents' understanding of how they can support their children's learning. Parents are appreciative of the workshops that you have run to help them understand the recent changes in the curriculum and assessment. The highly positive responses to Parent View and the comments that parents made to me during the inspection indicate that you are extremely successful in communicating with them and have their full support.
- Good use is made of links with other local schools and with a nearby teaching school to support staff development. Teachers value the opportunities that they have had to visit other schools to observe and learn from outstanding teaching. This was an area for improvement in the inspection of the predecessor school and is an indication of how leaders have successfully addressed the recommendations. Teachers also make good use of the opportunities that you create to observe each other teaching. This has been particularly successful in developing all teachers' ability to teach phonics effectively and has had a positive impact on pupils' reading.
- Teachers have high expectations of the standards of work in pupils' books and use marking and feedback very effectively to ensure that these high standards are met. They are diligent in identifying errors in spelling, punctuation and handwriting and make sure that pupils act on the marking in future pieces of work. They also make incisive comments about how the content of work can be improved and provide praise that recognises pupils' effort and determination.
- Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for improving the school. The school council helped to draw up plans for the adventure trail that is now installed in the school grounds. The eco-squad has worked alongside staff to identify ways that less energy can be used in school.
- Links with the local community are strong and are used well to prepare pupils

for their future working lives. Building firms that are constructing houses within the village have provided opportunities for pupils to visit the sites and are also helping as judges of a 'Dragons' Den' enterprise task that pupils are involved in.

- Pupils are also provided with good opportunities to learn about wider society. Visits to places of worship, including a mosque in a multi-ethnic urban environment, have widened pupils' understanding of other people's faiths and beliefs. This also helps to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Pupils understand about tolerance and respect and know that these are important values. They are developing a strong understanding of democracy and our cultural heritage, including through mock elections and recent celebrations of the Queen's 90th birthday. However, we discussed how further development of pupils' understanding of fundamental British values could be enhanced by making these aspects more explicit in curriculum plans.
- The assessment system that you have established supports the recent changes in the curriculum. Teachers work together and with teachers from other schools to make sure that their judgments on pupils' progress are accurate. They then use this information well to match teaching to the different needs of pupils in their classes. You have made sure that a range of measures are used to identify how well pupils are achieving. You are also aware that, at present, the system is not fully effective in allowing you to quickly identify if any pupils or groups of pupils are in danger of falling behind.
- The behaviour of the pupils is a particular strength. They are caring and considerate individuals, who are polite and respectful. They take great pride in the school and appreciate what it does for them. Older and younger pupils play together well and pupils say that there is no bullying. The values of Honeybourne First School Academy were summed up by a pupil who said 'Show respect for other people and they will show respect for you.' These positive attitudes are the result of way that you and your staff treat the pupils and the high expectations that you set for them.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the recently implemented assessment tracking system is refined further to ensure that leaders can more easily identify any pupils who are not making enough progress
- opportunities for the promotion of fundamental British values are more fully embedded in long-term curriculum planning
- governors share the good practice that exists so that they are able to make full use of the range of comparative performance information that is available to them.

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

Yours sincerely

Adam Hewett
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, a group of staff, and with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I spoke to a group of pupils and heard pupils from Year 1 read. I visited, together with you, all the classes in the school. We looked at pupils' work in their books during these visits. I considered a wide range of documentation, including information about pupils' current progress, the school self-evaluation and the school improvement plan. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures, including policies, records of referrals made to children's services and checks on staff employed in the school. I considered the 25 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and spoke to a number of parents before school. I reviewed the 13 responses to the online staff survey.