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Mrs Jane Macey
Principal
Hamstreet Primary Academy
Hamstreet
Ashford
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Dear Mrs Macey

Short inspection of Hamstreet Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 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 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

You successfully steered the school through a period of change as it converted to academy status. Your clear, calm and determined leadership ensured that the school's values and positive atmosphere were maintained throughout this process.

The school is a safe, welcoming and hard-working community. Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. Teachers and learning support assistants make sure that all pupils feel valued, greeting each by name every morning. Pupils settle into lessons quickly and move between lessons quietly. Playtimes are happy and harmonious occasions. Pupils enjoy chatting to friends and playing games together in the playground. They are clearly proud of their school and say that it is a friendly place.

The academy trust has played a key role in bringing the two schools in the academy together through, for example, shared meetings and training. You and your team work very well with colleagues in your partner school, sharing good practice and expertise. Most parents are very positive about the school. They say that their children enjoy school and feel that teachers and leaders are approachable and helpful.

Governors and staff share your determination to secure the best outcomes for all pupils. Governors' roles are more clearly defined than at the time of the previous

inspection. They play an active part in the school's development and hold leaders to account rigorously for pupils' achievement and well-being. Subject leaders have a confident understanding of pupils' learning in their subjects of responsibility and are clear about priorities for improvements in teaching.

You were understandably disappointed by the results of the national tests in 2016, in phonics and at the end of key stages 1 and 2. However, you and your team have responded swiftly with renewed and concerted efforts to improve teaching. Good-quality training and opportunities to learn from strong practice in other schools have strengthened teachers' and learning support assistants' subject knowledge. A review and reorganisation of phonics teaching has quickened pupils' progress, particularly during Year 1.

You and your team meet regularly with teachers to check pupils' progress and to identify their individual needs. You make sure that pupils of all abilities receive good-quality support when they find learning difficult. Your decision to give your vice-principal particular responsibility for disadvantaged pupils' learning is working well. She makes sure that teachers pay careful attention to disadvantaged pupils' progress when considering how well pupils are learning. As a result, teachers have higher expectations than previously of disadvantaged pupils' progress and are more alert to their needs.

Your determination that all pupils will achieve well has paid off, with an upturn in pupils' progress in all year groups during the past year. However, while pupils of all abilities produce work of an increasingly high quality across the curriculum, you have rightly identified the need to make sure that the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve their full potential.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the time of your predecessor school's most recent inspection. You have extended the early years outdoor area and improved its use so that children engage in stimulating activities of sufficient challenge. You have employed a teacher with the expertise needed to ensure that pupils acquire competent computing skills, which they then put to good use in a range of different subjects. You make effective use of training and visits to other schools, including the partner school in the academy, to help teachers to develop their own practice.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records and discussions with your safeguarding leaders show that you take any concerns about pupils' safety very seriously. You act promptly and proportionately to any safeguarding queries. You maintain close links with agencies, including health professionals and social services. You make good use of specialist advice to support pupils and their families. The academy provides regular training so that your staff and governors are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures. You make good use of the academy's induction procedures to check that new members of staff are suitably qualified. Your safeguarding governor and the local

authority complete useful checks on the school's safeguarding systems and policies so that you can be confident that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. High-quality and detailed records contribute well to pupils' safety and well-being.

Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. Pupils told me that, while occasionally a few pupils make unkind comments, bullying is rarely a problem. They say that you and their teachers listen carefully if they have any worries and make sure that concerns are sorted out quickly.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused particularly on: the quality of teaching during key stage 1, especially for the most able pupils; how well teaching in Year 1 equips pupils with phonics and reading skills; how effectively leaders and governors ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well and how thoroughly and consistently they check pupils' safety. I also considered how well leaders have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection of the predecessor school. These related to the early years outdoor area and the teaching of computing skills.
- Leaders have improved the quality of teaching considerably over the past year. They have eradicated weaker teaching and increased teachers' expectations of all pupils' potential to achieve. Leaders have heightened teachers' and learning support assistants' awareness of disadvantaged pupils' needs. As a result, teachers are more alert to these pupils' needs and provide good-quality support where needed. However, while pupils make much better progress as a result, the most able, including those who are disadvantaged, do not always make really strong progress.
- Phonics teaching has improved substantially over the past year. Confident and effective teaching during the early years and key stage 1 securely equips pupils with fundamental reading skills. Leaders make sure that any pupils making slower progress receive prompt and effective support. Significantly more pupils are on track to achieve expected levels in the Year 1 phonics check in 2017 than in 2016.
- Teachers inspire pupils to explore and read books at home, as well as enjoying those provided in school. Pupils of differing abilities enjoy reading and talk with interest about books. In addition to phonics, pupils use a wide range of strategies to help them to read successfully. For example, during my visit, pupils explained how they 'break the word up', 'look at the sounds' and 'use the pictures' if they get stuck with a word.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have increased pupils' access to up-to-date computer hardware. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop and apply computing skills in different subjects and do so confidently. Leaders make sure that pupils who do not have computers or internet access at home can use school computers during lunchtimes to complete homework whenever necessary.
- The early years outdoor area is well organised and safe. Children play and learn outdoors in all weathers, appropriately protected from the elements by

waterproof clothing. They thoroughly enjoy the wide range of interesting activities provided and make good progress.

- Pupils' overall attendance is consistently in line with national averages or above. However, while most pupils attend well, a small number of disadvantaged pupils have poorer attendance. Leaders are determined to make sure that all pupils attend regularly and achieve well. They work very closely with parents and agencies, including health professionals, to that end. As a result, substantial improvements in individual pupils' attendance have been secured over the past year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils achieve their full potential, including those who are disadvantaged
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is at least in line with other pupils nationally.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your vice-principal, your English and mathematics leaders and the principal of the partner school in the academy. I visited 11 lessons with you or the principal of your partner school.

I looked at the work in pupils' books and talked with pupils about their learning during visits to the classrooms. I also looked separately at a sample of pupils' books with your English and mathematics leaders and with your vice-principal. I listened to four pupils reading, two from Year 1 and two from Year 6. I talked with pupils about school life during my visits to the classrooms, during playtime and in the dining hall.

I took account of 82 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. I met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and one other governor. I also had a telephone conversation with the chair of the academy trust. I considered 18 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. I reviewed the school's website and considered a range of documents, including your summary of the school's effectiveness, the school's improvement plan, local authority reports and documents about safeguarding and attendance.