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Mrs R Williams
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Williams

Short inspection of Hinstock Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 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 July 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

You and the deputy headteacher are highly effective leaders. You both demonstrate an unwavering commitment to school improvement. You have accurately identified the school's strengths, of which you are rightly proud. Strengths include the evident passion and ambition of staff and the excellent behaviour of pupils. You are also clear about the areas in which you feel further development is required.

The school's mission statements 'Tomorrow's success begins today' and 'Learning is fun' are threaded through your curriculum and aspirations for the children. You and your staff are committed to making learning exciting. This commitment is evident in pupils' books and in teachers' planning. During the inspection, I observed children from the Reception Year and pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 participating in a giant science experiment to mark British Science Week. Pupils were predicting which bottle of 'fizzy pop' would create the greatest explosion under certain test conditions. Pupils watched in awe, and made scientific notes, as drinks such as cola and lemonade shot out of bottles, spilling onto the playground floor. Activities like this typify the enrichment opportunities at Hinstock.

You have also worked closely with governors to begin developing greater capacity in leadership. This has proved to be very useful, as you temporarily lead two other local schools from the AddMore Federation.

At the last inspection, Hinstock was asked to further improve standards in mathematics, to ensure that the monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorously evaluated and to make sure that the governing body checks all procedures and practice. Standards in mathematics have risen in both key stages as a result of high-quality staff training and a sharp focus on improving pupils' mental mathematics skills.

The overall quality of teaching has also improved. You and the deputy headteacher have devised a clear monitoring programme that evaluates the impact of teaching and provides staff with opportunities to share their practice and learn from one another. You have identified that your rigorous monitoring and sharing of best practice must continue so that a higher proportion of pupils secure more rapid rates of progress.

The governing body is fully aware of its statutory duties and has worked with you to develop a clear vision for the school. Governors have reviewed their effectiveness and are very clear about what works well and what requires further development. Governors are now focused on further improving their scrutiny of assessment information so that they can offer an even greater level of challenge and support.

In 2014, Hedgehogs Nursery, which is now part of the main school and managed by governors, received a separate inspection from Ofsted. The effectiveness of this provision for two- to four-year-olds is now reviewed as part of the whole-school inspection. In 2014, the Nursery staff were asked to place greater focus on improving children's vocabulary and to ensure that effective planning is in place to meet the learning needs of two-year-olds.

You have worked with the Nursery leader to improve the provision and train staff. As a result, the environment has developed considerably and staff have received training to enhance their questioning skills. During the inspection, I observed two-year-olds being effectively supported by staff. Leaders also pay close attention to the learning needs of two-year-olds and use their observations to inform day-to-day planning. It is clear that the Nursery has secured improvements. Over the past three years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has risen considerably. This is, in part, as a result of the good support they receive from an early age. However, I did identify that there is some variation in the quality of adults' questioning and that there is scope for further improvement in this area.

You have responded effectively to any weaknesses that have arisen since the last inspection. For example, your monitoring activities identified variations in pupils' progress in mathematics earlier in the year. You were quick to offer additional support in class and ensure that teachers adapted what they were doing to better meet the needs of pupils. As a result, progress rates have picked up again in mathematics and pupils are being given activities that offer greater challenge and scope to develop mastery. You have identified that these improvements must now be embedded.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils are at the heart of all that you do at Hinstock. You are fully aware of the latest statutory duties and have created a culture of safeguarding within the school. Any concerns regarding the safety of a child are appropriately acted upon. You and your governors have invested finances towards the installation of new perimeter fences and security systems. Welfare requirements in the early years are met and staff have received the relevant first aid and child protection training.

Inspection findings

- Following our discussion at the beginning of the inspection, we agreed key lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. To ascertain that the school remained good, the first key line of enquiry was to consider the extent to which leaders and governors have established a culture of safeguarding at Hinstock. As already outlined, safeguarding is effective. You also focus carefully on teaching pupils how to cooperate and look out for one another. When pupils leave in Year 6, they are able to purchase an item to mark their time in the school. In 2016, pupils purchased a 'friendship bench' for their peers. You report that it is well used by pupils and sits in pride of place in the playground. You pay close attention to developing the whole child and ensuring that pupils feel safe.
- I reviewed the effectiveness of early years and scrutinised how well assessment systems are used to ensure that children make at least typical rates of progress from their different starting points. Children's development is carefully tracked. Adults know children well and form strong relationships with them. Children's writing books show strong rates of progress. Progress is particularly rapid when children participate in activities and events that really engage them. For example, children wrote at length and chose a range of adventurous vocabulary to describe a fictitious crime scene that adults had created in the classroom earlier in the year. However, there is some variation in the quality of adults' questioning. Adults do not yet routinely use their training and the prompts around them to ensure that their questioning is fully challenging children. As a result, children's speaking and listening skills are not being developed as rapidly as they could be.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are effectively supported. This aspect of school provision is very well led and well organised. Teachers carefully devise well-chosen targets for pupils, which are regularly reviewed. Parents that I spoke to, and those that responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, also feel that their child's needs are well met. As a result of the school's work, a number of pupils have made accelerated rates of progress.
- The use of pupil premium funding is a particular strength of the school. You meticulously monitor expenditure using a range of tools and have devised a new strategy. Your strategy precisely identifies the barriers that eligible pupils may face and responds to these with appropriate actions. Though clearly detailed and of a very high quality, your plans are too new for their effectiveness to be fully appraised at this stage. However, there are no telling gaps between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other groups within school.
- The local authority adviser has worked with the school to support the

development of assessment and tracking systems. You have also worked alongside the adviser and attended training sessions to enhance your management of pupil premium expenditure and reporting arrangements. The local authority provides effective support and has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness.

- The behaviour and conduct of pupils was exceptional throughout the inspection. Pupils were keen to tell me about their favourite books and authors. Those that I spoke to at lunchtime say that behaviour is good and that they do not have any worries about bullying. Pupils are clearly happy at school and very much enjoy learning.
- The vast majority of parents are happy with Hinstock and all of the respondents to Parent View say that they would recommend the school. Comments from parents, which are typical of the views of many, include: 'My children love going to this school and think the world of their teachers' and 'The teachers are dedicated and work really well as a team to support, encourage and nurture the children.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff are provided with further opportunities to improve their teaching by sharing their most effective practice and thereby helping pupils to secure more rapid rates of progress
- the governing body further scrutinises pupils' progress and offers an even greater level of challenge and support to all staff
- adults' questioning skills continue to develop within the early years so that children are routinely challenged and a higher proportion continue to progress towards achieving a good level of development.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Keay
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held a meeting with you and the deputy headteacher at the start of the inspection to review the school's self-evaluation and development plans. As a result of our discussions, we determined key lines of enquiry to explore throughout the day. I met with parents at the school gate, reviewed the 14 responses to Parent View

and 12 parental comments via free text. I also took account of the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire and 43 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

I reviewed the school's single central record and scrutinised a range of school documentation, including child protection records, training certificates, policies, risk assessments and governing body minutes.

I undertook a joint learning walk with you in the early years and observed pupils from the Reception Year and Years 1, 2 and 3 participating in a science experiment in the playground. I scrutinised books in classes and in separate meetings with you and the deputy headteacher.

I met with five members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. I spoke with the local authority adviser on the telephone.

I spoke to pupils throughout the day and heard pupils from Year 2 read.