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Mrs Sue Turk
Head of School
Halsford Park Primary School
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Dear Mrs Turk

Short inspection of Halsford Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 June 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 converted to an academy in July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since converting to an academy.

You provide strong leadership at Halsford Park. Since becoming head of school in 2015, you have worked tirelessly to secure continual improvement. Your hard work, and that of other leaders who support you, has improved an already good school further. Your staff support you well. The majority say the school is a lot better now than when it was last inspected, and that leaders do all they can to ensure staff feel motivated and respected. As one staff member stated, 'It is a pleasure to work with such a very supportive group of colleagues'.

Pupils enjoy attending Halsford Park. Their positive attitudes and exemplary manners shine through as they work hard to embody the school's values of 'responsibility, respect, compassion and courage'. They are enthusiastic learners who learn and play with brimming enthusiasm. They say that teaching 'is always great' and that they love the challenges teachers provide, that make lessons 'interesting and fun'. They aspire to carry out additional responsibilities. One Year 5 pupil stated, 'I can't wait to be in Year 6, because I'll get to help the younger children.'

Parents hold the school in high regard. They like that staff are friendly and approachable, and say that their children are looked after well. Many commented on the positive impact the school's values have on their children. One parent stated:

'We are really pleased with our child's attitude towards school. We use the school's values at home to reinforce good behaviour as they are so simple, positive and universal.'

Leaders have made sustained improvements to the school. You have ensured that appropriate challenge is a strong feature of teaching, and that effective feedback ensures pupils are clear of their next steps for learning. Your collaborative approach to developing teaching and learning across the school has enabled staff to develop their own practice well.

As a result of your actions, current pupils throughout the school are making good progress. Most children in the early years are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. In Year 1 and Year 2, the very large majority of pupils have achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening test. School information, and work in pupils' books, demonstrates that most pupils are working at a level appropriate for their age in English and mathematics.

You have high aspirations for all pupils to achieve well. You know that despite recent success in improving overall rates of attendance, some disadvantaged pupils still miss too much school. Rightly, you are also keen to ensure that a greater proportion of pupils, including the most able, can write at the highest standard.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have created a strong culture at Halsford Park to keep children safe. Records are detailed, and appropriate checks are made when recruiting new staff. The school's single central record of this information is of a high quality.

You ensure that staff receive appropriate and timely safeguarding training. When taking up post, all new starters receive a detailed induction that includes child protection. You also ensure that all staff are kept up to date, and know what actions to take to protect children from harm.

You provide extensive opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. A group of Year 5 pupils demonstrated their broad knowledge of online safety by explaining: 'You should never post pictures of yourself online wearing your school uniform because someone might be able to identify who you are, and where you go to school.'

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we focused on how effectively leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, are supported to attend well and make good progress. We also scrutinised how well pupils are enabled to make good progress in writing. Lastly, we looked closely at pupils' behaviour and how it contributes to effective learning.
- Leaders have introduced a number of relevant initiatives to support disadvantaged pupils to attend school more regularly. For example, the breakfast

club enables some of these pupils to be in school on time, enjoy breakfast with their peers, and be ready to learn successfully. Consequently, overall rates of attendance for this group of pupils are beginning to rise but leaders are rightly taking firmer measures, including working with external agencies, to ensure this improvement continues.

- You have developed successful strategies to help disadvantaged pupils achieve well. For example, the weekly, extra hour of teaching pupils receive with their class teacher is used effectively to boost their self-esteem, review learning, and help prepare them for upcoming lessons the following week. Your resolve to enhance opportunities for this group of pupils is helping many of them to achieve successfully.
- You have placed a strong emphasis on developing pupils' ability to write well. This starts in the early years, where children were very enthusiastic to share the wonderful stories they were writing about 'Super Worm'. Successful teaching in this setting ensures that children develop their emerging writing skills.
- Pupils' keenness to write effectively is developed skilfully throughout key stage 1 and key stage 2. For example, in Year 2 pupils were writing about a trip to the coast. One pupil, demonstrating a strong ability to write descriptive sentences with effective word choices, started with the line, 'One beautiful day at the seaside lots of happy people were swimming in the gentle sea.'
- You have rightly identified that a greater proportion of pupils, including those who are most able, are capable of making accelerated progress in writing. Your assessment information suggests improvements are already having a positive effect but this is yet to be demonstrated in national assessments.
- Pupils respond positively to the consistently high expectations upheld by staff. They behave well in lessons, and share their thoughts and ideas with staff and fellow pupils with confidence. Despite today being the hottest day for forty years and classrooms being incredibly hot, pupils listened attentively to each other, worked diligently and learned well, demonstrating significant enthusiasm.
- Your strong determination to embed the school's ethos helps pupils to develop a strong sense of British values. For example, in assembly pupils learned about the important work carried out by the emergency services and the armed forces. You ensure that pupils have a deep appreciation for respect and compassion. Consequently, your school prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance rate of disadvantaged pupils continues to rise
- pupils, particularly those who are most able, make accelerated progress in writing and achieve at a suitably higher standard.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for West Sussex. This letter will be published

on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dom Cook
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I observed learning across classes in the early years, and in key stage 1 and key stage 2 jointly with the head of school and other leaders. I spoke to pupils, and examined their work in their exercise books. Meetings were held with senior leaders, including the head of school and the executive headteacher. I met with four governors, including the chair of trustees. I spoke on the telephone with the school's adviser from the local authority. I took into account 106 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 61 written comments. I also analysed 36 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. A range of documents was reviewed, including: the school's development plan, leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, the school's single central record of recruitment checks made on staff, information about pupils' achievement, the local authority's reports, and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.