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Mrs Bronwen Gleave
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Gleave

Short inspection of Hugo Meynell CofE (VC) Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 October 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The new leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since taking up your post, you have quickly established a new vision for improving reading, writing and mathematics within the school. The hard work of you and your leadership team has ensured that the school has continued to improve and that pupils learn and achieve well.

Hugo Meynell Primary School is a welcoming school. Pupils are happy and polite. In lessons observed, pupils were well engaged and motivated to learn. Pupils use a range of resources to help them extend their learning. For example, pupils in key stage 1 used photographs of themselves doing various activities in the playground to identify related verbs. Other pupils explained that, 'There were lots of colourful things to help us on the walls' and 'that working walls were really useful'. Consequently, pupils are becoming increasingly confident when writing. Across key stage 1, pupils that were identified as being disadvantaged were well supported and achieved in line with other pupils within the class.

Your governing body is committed to the school. Governors hold you to account and are highly supportive and well informed of the school's current priorities. They have an accurate picture of how well pupils are doing through spending time in lessons and meeting with senior leaders. Parents are very supportive, which is reflected in them attending school at weekends as 'helping hands' to improve the school grounds. Parental responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, and gained through

informal conversations with parents after school, were almost universally positive. As one parent said: 'I like the enthusiasm of the teachers; it rubs off on the children. Teachers know the families and parents well, which means the school has a great community'.

Since the previous inspection, you have focused on ensuring that the quality of teaching is at least good throughout the school. Evidence from your own monitoring, work in pupils' books and assessment information confirm that this is the case, particularly in writing. It is clear that children get off to a good start in the early years. At this early stage in the academic year, children were settled and enjoying the very stimulating environment in both the Nursery and Reception classes. This momentum continues into key stage 1, where outcomes for pupils in reading, writing, mathematics and phonics continue to be at least above expectations.

All staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire are proud to be part of Hugo Meynell and feel that the school is well led and managed. Staff share your vision and there is a strong sense of the staff team working together to achieve the best for pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff undertake frequent training so they understand their roles and responsibilities. Record-keeping is effective. The school has forged good relationships with external agencies to help children and their families access the help they need. Pupils are confident that they have a trusted adult with whom they can share any worries. Parents, pupils and staff agree that pupils are well cared for and safe.

Pupils say that poor behaviour is rare but, when it does happen, staff deal with it quickly and fairly. Pupils feel well cared for by staff in school. They are taught about potential risks and how to stay safe in different situations. These include how to use the internet safely and dangers from strangers.

You and other leaders have ensured that all safeguarding records are detailed and of high quality. The school completes all relevant checks on staff, supply teachers, governors and regular visitors to the school to make sure that they are suitable people to work with children.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision including pupils' attendance levels. In particular, we focused on the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who were persistently absent. Leaders have worked with pupils and parents to promote the benefits of regular attendance. Consequently, attendance rates have improved over the past year and are above average for all groups of pupils.
- Children in the early years get a great start to their education because the area is led very effectively. Teachers in both Nursery and Reception work closely

together to ensure that they and their respective teams adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of individuals and groups of children. The proportion of children who attained a good level of development at the end of their time in Reception has remained above the national average.

- Pupils' achievement in key stage 1 continues to be above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The results in 2016 and in 2017 are equally positive in all areas, including phonics.
- The number of pupils who are disadvantaged is small and varies from year to year. We focused on how well disadvantaged pupils achieve and how much progress they make from their starting points. You have made the progress of all disadvantaged pupils a priority and the impact of this is clear in the progress they making currently in school. While outcomes for the small groups of disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 2 are below national averages, your ambition is for disadvantaged pupils to be achieving at least as well as their peers across the school. This is a key area for development this year and you have strategic plans and actions in place to achieve this.
- There are a small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and I examined how well these children are provided for on an individual basis. The support you offer these pupils is having a positive impact on their progress. You have ensured that your teaching assistants are well trained. Whether working in class alongside a teacher, one-to-one, or with a small group, they have the skills to meet the needs of a range of pupils effectively. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do well from their various starting points.
- During the inspection I examined the provision for, and improvement in, pupils' writing across the curriculum. Together, we observed literacy provision throughout the school and learning in all classes. It was clear that teachers offer many opportunities for children and pupils to write and practise their phonics skills. For so early in the term, sensible guesses of common and tricky words and some degree of accuracy were evident.
- The books we looked at across the school showed writing to be developing well. Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to write across the curriculum. Good progress is evident in pupils' books and it is mostly the same for all groups of pupils. Teachers across the school model writing well and provide strong criteria and structures to support pupils. This ensures that they think about what they are writing and how to make it exciting.
- Leaders have introduced a new approach to the curriculum. Pupils enjoy the range of trips and visitors to their school and use these experiences to gather first-hand information about their topics. Some of the activities planned for the wider curriculum lack a clear measurable focus. As a result, pupils' foundation subject skills are not always developed as well as they could be. Leaders are aware that lessons would benefit from being more closely linked to skills development in some subjects and already have plans in place to address this.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders and teachers' actions continue to increase the proportion of specific groups, in particular disadvantaged pupils, that achieve and exceed expectations by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics
- the assessment systems of the wider curriculum are more robust so that skills associated with the foundation curriculum are enhanced.

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

Yours sincerely

Max Vlahakis
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your leadership team and with the improvement officer for the school. I spoke with parents at the end of the school day and I met with a group of pupils. I met with four members of the governing body. We visited classrooms together and I looked at a range of pupils' work. We discussed the progress of different groups of pupils and the school's plans for improvement. I considered the responses of parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I scrutinised evidence from a range of documents, including: leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance, information regarding procedures for safeguarding and monitoring behaviour, information on how the pupil premium is spent, and analysis of attendance and a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding and behaviour. I checked the school's single central record to ensure that it met current safeguarding regulations. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and out on the playground and at lunchtime.