

25 January 2018

Mrs Kim Bailey
Headteacher
Huntington Primary Academy
North Moor Road
Huntington
York
North Yorkshire
YO32 9QT

Dear Mrs Bailey

Short inspection of Huntington Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 10 January 2018, 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 became an academy in April 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection of the predecessor school in March 2013.

You know the strengths and weaker areas in the school in detail. You work with determination alongside your governing body and senior staff, setting a clear course for improvement. You are clear about how you seek to sustain and develop the school's strengths further and address relative weaknesses quickly and effectively. This motivates your staff and gives parents and carers confidence in the work of the school.

- Since taking up post in November 2016, you have set about building a learning community that puts pupils at the centre of its work to support their personal development, well-being and achievement.
- You have successfully engaged the local community to support pupils' learning. Many helpers and volunteers work with staff regularly to help pupils learn as well as they can. This complements your work with staff to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment continuously.
- You have worked with other leaders and staff to renew and reshape the curriculum, providing a rich range of opportunities for personal development and achievement. The curriculum, supplemented by a wide range of after-school clubs, such as the dance and gymnastics clubs, and the breakfast club, engages and interests pupils. They enjoy their learning and try hard to do their best.

- Well-planned monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress enable you and your leadership team to provide effective additional support for pupils who are at risk of falling behind. You use checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to target professional development to improve staff members' planning and classroom practice. Training has sustained and continues to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, pupils make good progress overall across a broad range of subjects.
- Your evaluation of the school's performance leads to well-focused staff development work. You use your local network of the school's and other external support to address any areas of weaker performance promptly. For example, the current work to improve the progress pupils make in writing is bringing about rapid improvement. You, with your leaders, recognise that this area needs to be developed further, so that improvement is sustained over time.
- You have developed the skills of your team of senior and middle leaders. They make a significant difference to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the curriculum in their areas of responsibility. As a consequence, achievement at key stage 1 and in the early years is strong, sustained over time and continues to improve.
- You have continued to work with families to ensure that pupils attend school well. Your efforts have led to a notable reduction in the numbers of pupils who do not attend regularly. However, you know that a small number of pupils still do not attend regularly enough.

Governors are well-informed. They know the school well and what needs to be done to keep it improving. Occasionally, governors do not check quickly enough that the actions for improvement, led by you and your staff, are bringing about the intended improvements rapidly. Governors share their ambition with you for pupils to achieve well, and develop the personal skills they need for life as young adults in modern Britain. Governors challenge you and hold you and other leaders to account for pupils' personal development and achievement in a safe and caring environment. Governors' challenge and determination for the school to provide the best education possible for all pupils energises the school's work.

Safeguarding is effective.

Governors and the leadership team work with you to ensure that all the arrangements to keep pupils safe and safeguard them are fit for purpose. All the required checks to ensure that only suitable adults, including volunteers, work with children are carried out and recorded carefully. You ensure that all staff are trained well, so that they know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. As a result, the school records are precise. This enables the school to work with families and other appropriate agencies, ensuring that early help is in place for pupils, when it is needed. Leaders keep a sharp eye out for ways in which they can further develop staff knowledge and understanding about safeguarding issues. Currently, leaders are developing staff members' understanding about the possibility of peer-to-peer abuse.

You work hard to ensure that pupils attend regularly, so that they have the full benefit of the curriculum that contributes to their safety and well-being. Pupils learn in age-appropriate ways about the risks they might face and how to minimise them. For example, pupils are able to talk with confidence about how to keep themselves safe when they use the internet or digital technologies. This contributes to their safety in and out of school. Wider work to keep pupils safe, such as road safety and 'bike-ability', are valued by pupils. Without exception, pupils say they feel safe in school and are well cared for. They know they can get help from an appropriate adult whenever they need it. Similarly, parents and staff are confident that the school keeps pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- By refocusing staff training on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment following the school's designation as an academy, you have sustained and improved high levels of achievement in early years and key stage 1. High levels of attainment have been sustained at key stage 2 overall, and improvement in the rates of progress in writing for current pupils is increasing rapidly.
- You and your leadership team ensure that staff have a firm focus on continuously improving pupils' accurate writing and quality of language. You recognise that this is a work in progress, and that your current successes need to be sustained over time to secure yet better outcomes for pupils, as they leave key stage 2.
- You have renewed both the curriculum and assessment frameworks. As a result, staff are better able to direct additional support and challenge where it is most needed and track pupils' progress more accurately. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively, by taking into account pupils' learning needs. As a consequence, current pupils, from different starting points, are making strong progress. In some aspects, disadvantaged pupils make faster progress than others.
- You and your leadership team recognise that the recently implemented sets of subject progress statements need to become embedded in day-to-day practice. You have put in place plans to check carefully that pupils make just as strong progress across the wider range of foundation subjects as they do in core subjects.
- Governors support the school through their work to ensure that the school site is safe, and safeguarding arrangements are effective. They work with the school closely to check regularly that arrangements to keep pupils safe remain effective.
- You make sure that the programme for personal, health, social and economic education provides ample opportunities for pupils to learn about how to keep safe, for example by learning about healthy relationships and healthy lifestyles.
- Your work to improve attendance is paying dividends. Overall attendance is above the national average and the proportion of pupils who do not attend regularly is falling quickly. You recognise that further work is needed in supporting a few families further to ensure that all pupils attend well, whenever they can.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff keep a firm focus on the quality and accuracy of pupils' writing, so that pupils continue to build and consolidate their confidence in writing in English lessons and across a wider range of subjects
- staff continue to refine the renewed curriculum plans to improve teaching, learning and assessment, and so accelerate progress rates for all groups of pupils further, especially in key stage 2
- the impact of actions for improvement, including further improvement in the rates of persistent absenteeism, is checked at an early stage.

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

Yours sincerely

Christopher Campbell
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, other senior leaders and members of the governing body. I held discussions with pupils and observed them during the course of the school day. I observed learning in lessons and looked at a range of pupils' work. I talked with a number of parents informally, and considered their views and those of your staff. I also evaluated the school's arrangements to keep pupils safe, and considered a range of other documents. These included records of pupils' progress, their behaviour and attendance, and the school's plans for improvement.