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Mr Kevan Lomas
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Lomas

Short inspection of Hilton Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 January 2018 with Jay Virk, Ofsted Inspector, 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 in good in July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The actions you and other leaders have taken to move the school forward have been successful. You have maintained a good pace to recent change. You have successfully maintained a strong team ethos in the school. You set high expectations for staff and pupils.

The governing body knows the school well and makes a good contribution to the school's leadership. Governors are committed to the school and are passionate about meeting the needs of pupils. They strive for improvement, and challenge you about how well the school is doing.

Staff are proud to be part of the school. They work well as a whole-school team and in mini-teams. They support each other well. This teamwork ensures good communication across the school and a shared sense of purpose and innovation. Support from leaders helps them to try new ideas that will improve pupils' learning. In mathematics and English lessons, they make sure that all pupils have direct teaching and engage in very practical 'hands-on' learning activities. For example, pupils in key stage 1 used 'real' money to solve problems and calculate their answers. They worked very effectively as competing teams.

The pupils are a credit to the school. They respect the school's values and learning environments. They develop socially because staff encourage them to take responsibility. Staff model, in their own behaviour and attitudes, the good values

they expect in pupils. Consequently, pupils are polite and courteous and get on well together. They happily talk about their learning with visitors and behave sensibly in class or when moving around such a large school at breaktimes. Pupils show concern for each other, follow school rules closely and take notice of instructions from supervising adults.

You give pupils many opportunities to take positions of responsibility. They enthusiastically take these up and perform their tasks well. The school council plays an active part in helping you to identify where improvement is needed. For example, pupils helped to develop a child-friendly 'Guide to safety'. They are rightly proud of carrying out roles in the school such as by being 'mini-leaders', part of the anti-bullying team, house captains or 'eco-councillors'.

Teaching is good but some teachers do not place enough emphasis on developing pupils' writing skills in other subjects. This means that some pupils are not achieving all they should when they write up their work in subjects such as science. Subject leaders are also not placing enough emphasis on checking the attainment and progress in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics. This means that they are not able to provide the support pupils need when they are falling behind with their work. This particularly affects the progress of disadvantaged pupils, who are not making consistently good progress across all subjects.

Safeguarding is effective

Leaders, including the governing body, have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding at Hilton Primary School.

Parents and carers, and staff, agree that pupils are safe at school. Pupils told me that they feel safe because of the care and attention provided by adults. Pupils confidently explained the strategies they would use to stay safe when online. They also told me that they value the work of staff in ensuring that they understand what bullying is. On the rare occasions bullying does occur, pupils are confident that it is dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Staff receive relevant and up-to-date training in safeguarding. They know the signs that indicate that a child may be at risk and in need of support. Hilton Primary School is now the lead 'Attachment Aware' school in Derbyshire. It has developed expertise in supporting pupils and their families with specific needs and vulnerabilities. Staff expressed confidence that, if they were to report a concern, it would be dealt with in a timely, effective way by the designated safeguarding lead. Leaders' well-kept records confirm this. Pupils welcome the 'ocean retreat room' which provides a quiet safe place to reflect and 'calm down'.

Governors ensure that the record of checks carried out when recruiting staff is accurately maintained. The governing body has also commissioned a regular external audit to provide further assurance of the effectiveness of this aspect of the school's work.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to establish the progress made in improving the quality of teaching. Progress slowed last year in reading and writing for middle- and high-ability pupils, particularly boys, compared with their progress in mathematics. Leaders have a precise understanding of the reasons why pupils did not achieve as well in reading and writing in key stage 2. As a result, they have amended the way reading is taught. They now ensure that pupils develop their skills of comprehension, inference and explanation. Teachers now use a wider range of classic books and authors in Year 6. Both boys and girls are making faster progress this year.
- Over the last three years, you have made changes to the way mathematics is taught across the school. Enthusiastically led by the mathematics coordinator, you responded well to the raised expectations of the curriculum. Staff training and professional development ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary skills to deliver it. You constantly review the curriculum to discover the gaps in pupils' understanding. Pupils like mathematics, one saying, 'It is always fun and we get it.' As a result of this sustained improvement, pupils in Year 6 achieved above the national average in mathematics in the 2017 national tests.
- Teachers are now making sharper use of assessment information. Those who need support are given it quickly to help them catch up. Pupils know how to improve their work to make faster progress. Teachers make consistent well-crafted comments about their work, which they follow with improved responses. This has led to improved standards in key stage 2 during the current year. We agreed, however, that this work is not yet leading to consistently good progress for a small number of disadvantaged and most-able pupils, and not across all subjects.
- I also considered the progress that pupils have made in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils have a rich, broad curriculum, which leaders keep under regular review. Some work, for example in history in Year 6, is of good quality but this is not always the case. The quality of writing is not good for all pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics. Opportunities are missed to improve and extend their writing skills. Subject leaders do not precisely track the progress that groups of pupils make across the curriculum so that they can provide support when a pupil or group of pupils falls behind. This is a particular issue for disadvantaged pupils. We agreed that further development of subject leadership roles was a priority.
- The second line of enquiry was to establish whether teachers consistently improve the accuracy of pupils' spelling and their presentation. Pupils' books show that they relish the chance to apply their literacy skills, have a pride in their work, their own appearance and their school. Pupils typically take great care in working in their books in key stage 1 and regularly check and correct spellings. This is now a strength of the school.
- My final line of enquiry was to establish the impact of leaders' actions to improve communication with parents. Parents are now very positive about the school.

Almost every parent who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, or who spoke to us during the inspection believes the school is well led. They feel that staff listen to them and act on any concerns they have. They typically make comments such as, 'My daughter is very proud of the school and can't wait to get into class in the morning.' They also commented on the timely and helpful progress reports and newsletters.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- subject leaders check the attainment and progress of groups of pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics, and provide pupils who fall behind, and especially disadvantaged pupils, with the support they need
- all teachers maintain a strong focus on developing pupils' skills in writing across all subjects, so that pupils achieve more.

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

Yours sincerely

Philip Garnham
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Evidence collected on this inspection included:

- observations of teaching and learning throughout the school with you and the deputy headteacher, and listening to some pupils reading in lessons
- meetings with school leaders and with members of the governing body
- discussions with parents at the start of the school day and the scrutiny of responses to Parent View
- consideration of a range of documents supplied by the school, including the school development plan, policies, information about attendance and safeguarding, and records of checks on the quality of teaching
- scrutiny of the school's assessment information and pupils' books in different subjects from the current academic year.