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Mr Duncan Rose
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Rose

Short inspection of Huntington Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 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 was judged to be good in November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

Along with your staff team, you have created a caring and inclusive school where pupils are happy, confident and achieve well. Pupils say that they are proud of their school; they wear their uniforms with pride and are rarely absent. Staff are also proud to be part of the school community. They say that they feel well supported by senior leaders and that they are valued for the contribution that they make to the school. All members of staff who completed the staff survey agreed that the school has a culture that encourages calm and orderly conduct, and that leaders have high expectations for all pupils.

Children get off to a flying start in the early years. The environment, both indoors and outdoors, is highly stimulating and well resourced. Staff ensure that children settle in quickly and develop positive attitudes to learning. As pupils move through the school these positive attitudes are maintained, as a result of effective teaching and the excellent relationships that exist between pupils and the adults who teach them. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, at the end of key stage 2 in 2017, was well above the national average. Furthermore, a greater number of pupils were working at greater depth than found nationally by the time they left Year 6.

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, share their children's positive view of the school. One parent wrote, 'My children are extremely happy and well looked after at this school. They feel safe and enjoy the positive environment surrounding them each day.' Another said, 'We are very happy with the progress made by our children and the lengths that the teachers go to, to ensure our children are supported and extended in all areas of school life.'

Governors provide effective challenge to senior leaders and have a sound, strategic overview of the main priorities for improvement. They are aware of what needs to be done and how you will go about achieving it. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and routinely use the school's improvement plan to hold senior leaders to account. Governors share your high aspirations for the school and are committed to improving the school still further.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to ensure that other key leaders have the opportunity to make checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. You were also asked to improve pupils' progress in reading, particularly for those pupils in key stage 1 who struggle to develop their early reading skills. You have made progress in addressing both of these issues. Staff now play a more active role in monitoring the quality of teaching in English and mathematics. However, you recognise that further work needs to be done to ensure that other subject areas are monitored more effectively. The progress that pupils make in reading, including those who struggle with their early reading development, is now a strength of the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that pupils' well-being is given the highest priority at Huntington Primary School. Staff understand their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils, and act swiftly if they have any concerns about pupil welfare. The school's policies and procedures are comprehensive and effective in ensuring that pupils are kept safe.

Safeguarding leaders are well trained and understand the importance of intervening early should any concerns arise. They liaise well with external agencies, when necessary, to ensure that pupils are protected and families are supported. Leaders also ensure that meticulous records are kept of the checks that are made on all adults who work at the school.

Pupils have confidence in the adults who look after them and told me that there is always somebody there for them to speak to if they have any concerns. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, a view that is shared by almost all parents who responded to Parent View.

Governors keep a good overview of safeguarding matters, and ensure that policies and procedures are up to date and fit for purpose. The safeguarding governor has a very clear understanding of safeguarding practice in the school. She works closely

with the school to monitor a range of aspects, including staff recruitment. Other governors help to ensure that the school site is well maintained and secure, and governors who are regularly involved in staff interviews and appointments have attended safer recruitment training.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry for this inspection centred on pupils' progress in reading. This is now a significant strength of the school. There are many attractive displays around the school that encourage and inspire pupils to read regularly. Children in the early years get off to a good start in developing their knowledge and understanding about letters and the sounds that they make. Those pupils who struggle to develop early reading skills are given good support. They read regularly in school and the vast majority develop into fluent, independent readers. The school's success in teaching reading is reflected in the end of key stage test results in 2017. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level, and those judged to be working at greater depth, was above the national average at the end of both key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- My second line of enquiry was a focus on pupils' behaviour. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exceptionally good at Huntington. Children in the early years develop very good learning behaviours. They quickly learn school routines and respond well to the high expectations that staff have of them. In the lessons that I saw during this inspection, pupils demonstrated good levels of concentration and were respectful to the adults who were teaching them. Conduct was also good at playtimes and in the hall at dinner time. Although a small number of parents expressed concern about behaviour and bullying on Parent View, nothing was seen, during this inspection, to indicate that there are problems with behaviour. Pupils say that incidents of bullying are extremely rare at the school, and that staff sort any problems out quickly. School leaders keep detailed records which show that, on the rare occasions that bullying or poor behaviour occurs, firm and effective action is taken. All members of staff who responded to the Ofsted survey said that behaviour is at least good at the school, as did the vast majority of parents.
- My third line of enquiry was to explore the quality of pupils' learning in the wider curriculum. I found many strengths in this aspect of the school's work. The high-quality displays of pupils' work, in corridors and classrooms around the school, reflect a broad and rich curriculum which provides pupils with the opportunity to study a range of subjects on a regular basis. Pupils also have regular educational visits, including residential trips in all year groups in key stage 2. In Year 4, all pupils are given the opportunity to play a range of musical instruments, including the guitar and the samba drum. However, there was too much variation in the quality of work that I saw in pupils' science, history and geography books. In some classes, pupils are being taught well and are developing good scientific knowledge and a good understanding of Britain's past and the wider world. This is not the case in all classes. Too often, teachers set work in these subjects which lacks challenge and they are too willing to accept work of poor quality.
- My final line of enquiry was to establish how effectively senior leaders keep a

check on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. You monitor the quality of teaching closely through regular formal lesson observations, book scrutinies and termly meetings with teachers to discuss pupils' progress. Teachers appreciate the support that you offer them to develop their skills and also the training opportunities that you provide. Other senior members of staff are also involved in monitoring pupils' work in the core areas of English, mathematics and science. However, although this process has led to improvements in English and mathematics, it has not been as effective in other subjects. In science, for example, weaknesses in teaching have been identified but have not been addressed. In geography and history, books in some classes are rarely scrutinised and the quality of work is variable. As a result, pupils do not make consistently good progress in these subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should raise standards in science, history and geography, by ensuring that:

- all teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve in these subjects and regularly set work which challenges pupils
- regular and robust checks are made on the quality of pupils' work in these subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher. I also met with the early years lead and the subject leaders for science and English. I met with six members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. I spoke with parents, staff and pupils. I visited all classrooms, with the headteacher, to observe teaching and learning and spent time looking at the quality of work in pupils' books. I listened to pupils read and spoke with a group of Year 6 pupils about various aspects of school life. I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, breaks and dinner time. I reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the single central record, the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plan and records relating to the monitoring of teaching and learning. I also took account of the staff questionnaire, the pupil questionnaire and the 63 responses to Parent View.