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Mrs Helena Armstrong
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Armstrong

Short inspection of Hillview Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 June 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 May 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 taken concerted action to hold staff to account for improving the quality of teaching since taking up your post in January 2018. Governors understand the school's priorities, are committed to driving improvement and consequently take an active role in evaluating the effectiveness of your actions. You are well regarded by the majority of parents and carers who typically commented that you have made a 'fantastic impression' and that you are 'an inspiration'. Parents appreciate the fact that you are approachable and listen carefully to their concerns.

The majority of pupils enjoy school. Teachers provide interesting learning activities and, because pupils are keen to learn, they listen carefully in lessons and settle to work quickly. Over the last two years, good teaching in the early years has resulted in approximately three quarters of children achieving the expected standards. This is broadly in line with children nationally. Effective teaching in phonics ensures that pupils achieve well in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Last year, there were considerable improvements in outcomes at the end of key stage 1 compared to the previous year. Standards were maintained in key stage 2. Consequently, the proportion of pupils achieving expected and higher standards at the end of both key stages was close to, or above, that of pupils nationally.

Generally, good teaching ensures that the majority of current pupils make effective progress to reach the standards expected for their age. However, you acknowledge

that progress for some pupils, including older pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, has been slower. We discussed the fact that several of these pupils have complex learning needs or require ongoing support to help them to manage their emotions and behaviour. This has hindered their academic progress. You provide targeted pastoral support, which is paying dividends because it helps pupils to develop strategies to remain calm when they become angry or upset. For example, pupils have the opportunity to go to the 'Haven' when they want to discuss their worries. They also enjoy spending time with the school's dogs. You note that this support helps pupils to access their learning more effectively. However, you acknowledge that it will take more time to impact on pupils' academic progress.

You agree that, generally, achievement in writing across the school is not as strong as in reading and mathematics. You realise it will be crucial to further improve the teaching of writing so that pupils' achievement is at least in line with that in other subjects.

During the inspection, we discussed the importance of rigorously checking the progress of all pupils, as well as their attainment. You realise that this will help you to more accurately evaluate the effectiveness of teaching so that you can swiftly intervene when it needs to improve.

Safeguarding is effective.

You take all necessary steps to make sure that pupils are kept safe, and your safeguarding policies and procedures are clear and well understood. You provide relevant safeguarding training for all staff, which ensures that everyone understands how to refer concerns. You have recently updated your record-keeping system so that safeguarding records are more accessible. All staff take responsibility for recording safeguarding issues, and you take swift action when vulnerable pupils and their families need your help. You regularly review your actions to check that they are making a difference. You enlist the support of various outside agencies when further help is needed. You make all necessary checks to ensure that staff are safe to work with children and you record the details on the school's single central register. You have recently changed the start of the school day so that pupils can arrive earlier, go straight to their classes and engage in a variety of learning activities. This has improved punctuality and prepares pupils well for the school day. Whole-school attendance is broadly in line with that of pupils nationally.

Adults form caring and positive relationships with pupils and, as a result, pupils said that there is always someone they can turn to if they have problems. You and your pastoral team work hard to support all pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable or present challenging behaviour. Parents typically commented, 'The pastoral team are a wonderful asset', and 'Teachers genuinely care about children.' Pupils feel safe in school. They understand the behaviour you expect of them and can talk about the school's values, 'Respect everything and everyone'. Pupils commented that behavioural issues are usually resolved quickly. However, a small minority of parents, pupils and staff believe that leaders have an inconsistent approach to

behaviour management.

Inspection findings

- We looked at how well teaching in the early years and Year 1 helps current pupils, especially boys, to achieve well. This was because outcomes in the early years have fluctuated in recent years and boys have not achieved as well as girls. In addition, phonics outcomes have declined slightly. We visited the welcoming and exciting early years environment and observed children absorbed in their learning. For example, Nursery children enjoyed accurately counting objects eaten by the 'hungry caterpillar' and correctly put them into pots labelled with corresponding numbers. Reception pupils were engrossed in creating an outdoor 'shade sculpture', using strips of brightly coloured fabric and string. This year, in line with last year, good teaching has ensured that approximately three quarters of children have achieved or exceeded the expected standards. Effective teaching of all subjects at Year 1, including phonics, has resulted in the vast majority of current pupils making strong progress to achieve the standards expected for their age. There is little difference between boys' and girls' achievement.
- We also evaluated how effectively leaders are sustaining recent improvements to teaching in all subjects at key stage 1 and mathematics at key stage 2. We reviewed your assessment information and discussed the importance of rigorously checking pupils' progress to precisely evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. You agree that this is an area that needs further development. Generally, good teaching ensures that the majority of pupils in both key stages make effective progress towards achieving the standards expected for their age. However, achievement in writing across the school is not as strong as in reading and mathematics. In addition, older pupils do not achieve as well as others in reading, writing and mathematics. You are taking the necessary steps to improve teaching. As a result, teachers provide interesting activities, model learning well and provide clear feedback. This engages pupils in their learning and helps them understand how to improve their work. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, we observed pupils listening intently to an audio clip of a thunderstorm, which inspired them to develop their descriptive writing. Questions such as, 'What can you see and hear?' prompted pupils to write sentences such as, 'The rain is a whip, lashing the streets', and 'The thunder is as heavy as bricks.'
- Another line of enquiry was to establish how well teaching supports disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to make strong progress. This is because, over time, few of these pupils achieve expected or higher standards. You understand the needs of pupils well, which helps you to provide focused emotional, behavioural and academic support. Adults work sensitively with pupils and explain tasks clearly. This is improving many pupils' confidence and attitudes to learning. As a result, several pupils are making steady, although not consistently strong, progress. Some pupils, especially those who have more complex needs, are making slower progress. This is because it is taking time for ongoing pastoral support to have an impact on their academic progress. You recognise it will be vital to further develop the consistency of teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress. This will help pupils to get closer to achieving the standards expected for their age.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve the rigour of checks on pupils' progress so that they can precisely evaluate the effectiveness of teaching
- the teaching of writing in both key stages further improves so that pupils' achievement in writing is at least in line with that in other subjects
- they improve the consistency of teaching for older pupils so that pupils achieve higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics
- precisely focused support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities accelerates their progress so that they routinely achieve well.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Beeks
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I had meetings with you and other senior leaders. I also met with several members of the governing body and had a meeting with the local authority adviser. I reviewed your latest assessment information and we discussed the school's self-evaluation and school development priorities. We reviewed your safeguarding records and procedures, along with your latest attendance information. Together, we observed phonics in Reception and Year 1. We also observed a mathematics lesson in Year 5 and English lessons in both Year 6 classes. Along with your two assistant headteachers, we reviewed pupils' work in English and mathematics in Reception, Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6. I talked to pupils in breakfast club and during break and lunchtime. I also held a formal meeting with 13 pupils from Year 1 to Year 6. I met with parents at the start of the school day to gain their views of the school. I also took account of 76 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 47 additional free-text comments. I reviewed 24 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.