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Mr Pete Hallam
Principal
Minerva Primary Academy
The Greenway
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Dear Mr Hallam

Short inspection of Minerva Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 5 July 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 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.

Leaders and staff alike set high expectations for pupils in all aspects of school life. Teachers consistently model high expectations, fairness and equality. Pupils speak confidently about their school and their learning. All the pupils I spoke with said that the staff are caring and considerate and they make learning interesting. Pupils are proud that differences are celebrated, for example in culture, religion, gender and views. They, along with members of the school, do not tolerate or accept any form of bigotry or unkindness. They told me that no matter who you are, or when you join this school, you will be among friends.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Staff morale is high. This is a school where pupils know it is alright to make mistakes, because they learn from them. This helps to build their resilience. Pupils are taught to 'have a go' at challenging learning activities. Because of this, even if they get something wrong pupils do not lose their self-esteem or confidence.

Everyone in the school is excited about moving to the 'state of the art' building that they have watched being constructed next door. During this time of transition you have ensured that staff have remained focused. Pupils continue to succeed in their academic subjects and flourish in their personal development and well-being. Those pupils who attend Minerva School the longest make the best progress.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to improve the consistency of teaching of mathematics and for pupils to be given opportunities to respond to teachers' marking and feedback. Senior leaders are successfully improving these areas of the school's work.

You and your staff are aspirational in wanting an even more stimulating and enriching curriculum. You have rightly now prioritised developing the middle leadership of the creative subject areas to increase teachers' and teaching assistants' confidence and expertise.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team, along with the strong governing body, has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Checks on staff and volunteers meet statutory requirements, and training for leaders and staff is up to date. When pupils leave the school mid-year, or fail to attend, you ensure that they are not missing their education. You inform the correct agencies in a timely manner and are kept up to date with the whereabouts of the pupil.

There is a strong culture of protecting pupils and supporting families in the school. Staff know when to report and refer concerns. You and the staff provide strong care and support for pupils and their families. Along with other school staff, the family support worker provides strong support for families in times of crisis or individual need. Leaders take constructive action to ensure that pupils get the help that they need. As a result, pupils feel safe, and are kept safe.

Pupils told me that there is no bullying at the school. Pupils are confident that if someone was being bullied, an adult would stop it. They really appreciate the named trusted adults in the school, but feel confident in any member of staff to listen and to take care of them.

Inspection findings

- For the first line of enquiry, we agreed to look at what the school was doing to ensure the consistency in the teaching of mathematics and problem-solving. The school's agreed method of teaching mathematical problem-solving and reasoning is proving effective. It has helped pupils' understanding of more complex mathematical problems. More pupils can now work out different ways to solve problems and can explain their reasoning more clearly.
- The second aspect we looked at was the quality of pupils' writing, punctuation and grammar, particularly for those middle-attaining pupils. Overall, the quality of pupils' writing is a strength of the school. From low starting points, pupils' overall outcomes have been above the national average for the last two years by the time pupils leave Year 6. Leaders carefully check that teachers' assessments of what pupils know can do and understand are accurate. A strong focus on writing in all subjects means that pupils write with real purpose as well as for pleasure.
- Leaders identified that improvements were needed in ensuring that all pupils

could spell, punctuate and use grammar correctly. As a result, these areas are now strong. Those pupils who did not meet the standard in the 'grammar, punctuation and spelling' test only missed it by one or two points. During my inspection visit we noticed that sometimes pupils were not sitting in a position to best develop their writing, in terms of letter formation and speed. Some pupils do not have an accurate pencil grip and teachers do not consistently correct this.

- The third line of enquiry concerned how effectively disadvantaged pupils, particularly those in key stage 1, are supported by the school through the pupil premium funding. You and the governing body spend the additional funds provided for disadvantaged pupils wisely. You make sure that each pupil in the school is treated as an individual. Extra academic and emotional support and guidance are provided when needed. Leaders make sure that any provision is quickly put into place and that it provides good value for money.
- Next, we reviewed how well phonics is taught in the early years foundation stage. We saw that it was being taught following the government guidelines of best practice. Those pupils who do not reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 generally have additional needs such as communication and language, cognition and learning or social and emotional needs. Nevertheless, almost all reach the expected standard at the end of Year 2. This is due to the effective targeted support for individual pupils by the speech and language therapist. This support is further enhanced by class teachers, and classroom assistants who continue to develop pupils' understanding throughout the school day. They are able to do this through careful coordination that is underpinned by high-quality training and specialist inputs from speech and language therapists.
- Finally, we looked at pupils' attendance. Far more pupils join and leave the school mid-year than normally seen. This is due to the pupils' families moving outside of the school's catchment area, not because they want to leave the school. In the past, a few families did not understand the importance of regular school attendance. You employ a dedicated family worker who helps such families improve their children's attendance. Along with the education welfare officer and with leadership from the vice-principal, she has ensured that since the previous inspection, attendance has improved and persistent absence has decreased.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school continues to focus on improving phonics outcomes to be above the national average by the end of Year 1
- middle leaders are able to drive improvements in their area of expertise.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the academy council, chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Bristol City. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steffi Penny
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, I met with you, other leaders, members of the governing body and parents. I spoke with pupils during the day and met a group of pupils with their books. I scrutinised the quality of pupils' work. I considered the 13 responses by pupils to Ofsted's electronic questionnaire, and the 21 responses submitted by staff. I also noted the seven responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

I evaluated a wide range of documentation relating to safeguarding, self-evaluation, pupils' progress and governance.