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Mrs Jane Wood
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Wood

Short inspection of Hollybrook Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 12 March 2019, 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 March 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Since the previous inspection, you have also become the headteacher of the neighbouring junior school. The schools work well together to ensure smooth transition and continuity in learning. With your effective deputy headteacher, you have created a culture of the highest aspirations for your pupils and staff. You nurture your pupils well, ensuring that their personal development and well-being are the best they can be, together with ensuring that they reach high standards academically. All members of staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire said that they are proud to work at the school. They believe that the school has improved since the previous inspection.

Pupils love coming to school and say that 'learning is always fun' at Hollybrook Infants. They eagerly told me of many characteristics of school life that they enjoy. These included computing, fitness and 'plan-do-review' lessons, where pupils choose an aspect of their learning to practise or deepen. During my visit, pupils' behaviour in class and around the school was exemplary. They are polite, eager to learn and concentrate highly in their lessons. As one parent commented, 'My child loves going to school. The atmosphere and attitudes to learning are excellent.'

Leaders have built very strong relationships with parents and carers, who admire the work of school. They appreciate the regular opportunities that they have to be involved in their child's learning, through effective communication, home learning projects and attendance at end-of-topic events.

At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors noted many strengths, including the exceptional progress that pupils made in key stage 1 and excellent teaching. These remain strengths of Hollybrook Infants. Pupils attain highly. At the end of key stage 1, every year since the previous inspection, a greater proportion of pupils than that seen nationally have reached the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. At the school's previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve the progress that pupils make in the early years. Your work in this area, alongside effective support from your multi-academy trust, has been highly successful.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality. Any necessary actions are taken without delay. Staff are vigilant in following up any welfare concerns that they have about a child. Governors and your multi-academy trust regularly check that the school's safeguarding processes are working well.

Pupils said that they always feel safe in school and that adults listen, 'every single time we talk to them'. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe in many situations, including e-safety. They understand the importance of protecting personal information, explaining to me how they would make up a name online. Parents also agree that their children are safe at school. As one parent wrote, 'The school provides a safe and happy environment for the children to flourish.'

Inspection findings

- At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed that the focus would be on: teaching in the early years; how well pupils learn across the curriculum; and attendance and punctuality.
- Leadership of the early years is effective and, as a result, the provision has improved greatly since the last inspection. The learning environment, including the outside spaces, is highly stimulating and well resourced, enabling children to access a wide range of exciting learning experiences. Adults plan work that is challenging and encourages children to think for themselves to solve problems. Children's attainment on entry is broadly in line with age-related expectations. Due to effective teaching that precisely knows what children need to learn next, children, including those who are disadvantaged, make excellent progress. This has resulted in a greater proportion of children than seen nationally reaching a good level of development. Children are motivated to write. During my visit, children were confidently writing instructions, and then, reading them to make up a cup of squash. Many children can write simple sentences, applying their phonic

knowledge well to the letters that they write. Children have warm relationships with the staff. They play well with each other and know what is expected of them.

- The broad and balanced curriculum is very well planned at Hollybrook Infants and, as a result, most pupils achieve highly across the wide range of subjects. Pupils' knowledge and skills are built up systematically over time in all subjects. For example, leaders have identified a 'bag of skills' which pupils are taught in each subject area, such as mapping and interpreting data in geography. The most able pupils are challenged exceedingly well. During my scrutiny of pupils' books, I could see how teaching encourages pupils to think deeply about the knowledge that they are taught. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, the most able pupils proved why weather is hotter in the summer in England by explaining the tilt of the earth.
- Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress in all subjects and a good proportion attain the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, leaders are highly ambitious for the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. They strive to ensure that more disadvantaged pupils attain a greater level of understanding in subjects from the wider curriculum such as history, computing and science.
- Leaders work closely and determinedly with parents to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and are on time. They take appropriate action when a pupil's attendance or punctuality slips. As a result, most pupils' attendance is high and they are ready to start the school day, including those pupils eligible for free school meals. Systems for ensuring that pupils who are absent from school remain safe, are robust and followed through. However, current attendance rates are lower than that seen nationally for primary schools. This is because of a recent outbreak of seasonal influenza which affected many pupils and staff. This resulted in the closure of the school for a day in February 2019.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more disadvantaged pupils reach high standards in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, the chief executive officer of the Hamwic Education Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Southampton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lea Hannam
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss the school's effectiveness. Together, we visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning, talk to pupils, and to look at their work. With your senior teacher, we looked at the quality of work in a range of pupils' books. I considered 31 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text comments. I also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. Responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires were considered and I had a meeting with a group of pupils to discuss their views about the school.

I met with a governor and also met with three representatives from your multi-academy trust, including the chief executive officer. In addition, I met with the middle leader responsible for early years. I evaluated the school's safeguarding arrangements. A wide range of documents was examined, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement planning, attendance information, information about pupils' progress, and various policies. I also examined the school's website.