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Mr Glenn Atkinson
Headteacher
Hollinswood Primary School and Nursery
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Dear Mr Atkinson

Short inspection of Hollinswood Primary School and Nursery

Following my visit to the school on 4 June 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 June 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

The warmth, care and good quality of education that all pupils receive are clear to see. Parents and carers appreciate the care and attention that leaders give to the personal, social and emotional development of all pupils. One parent, reflecting the views of many, said, 'Hollinswood Primary School offers my child excellent opportunities to thrive and develop.' A thoughtfully planned curriculum enables pupils to have a good understanding of a range of ways to keep themselves safe. This includes online safety, road safety and bicycle safety initiatives. Pupils spoke about how they would tell a trusted adult immediately if they were concerned about something. They also knew that a website is safe 'If it has a padlock on it.'

Leaders and staff put a strong emphasis on developing a well-rounded education for pupils. There is a broad range of extra-curricular clubs, sporting opportunities and performances. Pupils' behaviour in class and during social times is good. Pupils enjoy opportunities to experience a range of trips and residential visits, supporting both their academic and personal development. Parents value these, with one parent verbalising the view of many of those responding to the free-text survey:

'The curriculum offer is brilliant, and I particularly like the residentials and trips on offer. They always link to what they are doing in class and this serves to enhance the learning journey. There is always a wide range of after-school activities on offer.'

Senior leaders have built a cohesive and passionate middle leadership team who know their subjects' strengths and areas for improvement in depth and detail. Strong strategic senior leadership and consistent modelling of techniques and expectations have developed the skills and ability of English and mathematics middle leaders, enabling them to lead their subjects well. These middle leaders are skilled at articulating the progress that pupils make over time and can evidence this progress in a range of ways. Particularly impressive was their ability to demonstrate progress in a succinct and clear manner through the focused and targeted scrutiny of pupils' work. Middle leaders of other curriculum subjects have not yet had similar opportunities to develop their leadership skills so that they can make a difference to the teaching and learning in their subjects.

Leaders encourage teamwork and see change as an opportunity. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language joining the school at various points during the year across all year groups. A third of the school population speak English as an additional language, with 33 different languages spoken. Leaders recognise, value and celebrate the rich diversity that this brings to the school. Leaders' expertise in supporting pupils who speak English as an additional language is being shared with schools across Telford and Wrekin and with wider audiences through published articles.

Staff morale is high. All staff responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire agree that they are proud to be a member of staff at the school. They enjoy working at the school and feel well supported. Staff understand the school's priorities and the actions that leaders are taking to improve the quality of pupils' education further. Effective mentoring means that newly and recently qualified teachers are well supported in their roles.

The governing body is effective. Governors support and challenge you and your staff well. They use an annual skills audit to ensure that they have the required knowledge and skills to respond to the changing demographics of the school. They use a range of data, reports and first-hand information, as well as information presented by middle leaders and discussions with school council pupils, to check the school's overall effectiveness. This enhances their understanding of school improvement. They are highly ambitious for the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders continually reflect upon the impact of what they are doing to keep pupils safe. They use what they have found out to fine-tune the way they work. For example, following an internal audit of safeguarding, governors introduced interviews with staff to question their understanding and implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures. Governors used the findings to develop training that builds upon the strong practice already in place. This leads to pupils being and feeling safe. Parents agree, and all who responded to the survey said that their children are safe and well looked after. As one parent put it: 'I am not

worried leaving my kids at school because I know they are in very good and caring hands!’

Safeguarding training for all staff and governors is regularly updated and appropriate to their roles. The designated safeguarding leads are thorough in their work. Staff are quick to report concerns and leaders follow up these concerns robustly. Record-keeping is meticulous. Leaders work closely with external agencies when necessary to ensure that pupils are protected and families are supported. You escalate matters when you feel that external agencies are not taking your concerns seriously enough. The procedures for recording pre-appointment checks on staff and for monitoring pupils’ attendance are rigorous and recorded precisely.

Inspection findings

- There has been a positive response to the areas for improvement for writing and mathematics identified at the previous inspection. Teachers use a range of opportunities to promote extended writing across the curriculum. Pupils’ writing shows that they can sustain pace and quality across a piece of writing in a range of genres and subjects. However, this has been balanced with the changing needs of pupils who enter school with little or no English vocabulary. Leaders’ regular reflection on information gained from checks on writing has helped them to provide targeted support to teachers. This has ensured that teachers develop skills and strategies that enable all groups of pupils to be successful writers and make strong progress. However, not enough pupils are working at greater depth in writing.
- Pupils are developing their ability to reason within mathematics. Leaders have worked hard to sustain the momentum of the work to develop pupils’ mathematical reasoning. Additional work has been done to ensure that pupils who speak English as an additional language develop and understand the precise nature of mathematical vocabulary in a way that they can then use to reason well.
- Professional development has increased all teachers’ awareness of what learning at greater depth looks like in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in pupils’ books demonstrates this, with clear examples of pupils across all year groups making strong progress. Some middle- and high-attaining pupils are beginning to show the sophistication of inference in reading, the complexity in writing and the depth of reasoning in mathematics required to achieve greater depth in their work.
- You know the background to your school well and demonstrate the ability to reflect on and respond to changes in the context. Appropriate and timely professional development has deepened staff’s understanding of when and how to use a particular approach to engage, support and challenge pupils. When implementing new approaches, leaders have given equal consideration to pupils who speak English as an additional language, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These approaches are becoming embedded across the school. As a result, all pupils are making good progress from their starting points.

- The environment in the early years is highly stimulating and well resourced. Children and adults have opportunities to work separately as a Nursery class and two Reception classes, as well as to mix together as an early years foundation stage unit. Children cooperate extremely well together. For example, one child had spent a long time developing a railway line on their own. A little later, several children joined the activity and they all found a way to further develop the railway line in a range of materials and talked together to create and narrate a game to play. They achieved this cooperative play independently.
- Children in the early years sustain concentration for lengths of time in a range of situations, both adult-led and child-initiated. This is a credit to the adults' skills and expertise in developing the prime areas of the early years curriculum, as children enter the setting with skills that are well below those expected. Children make substantial and sustained progress in all areas of learning throughout Nursery and Reception. This is a direct result of teachers' accurate assessment and planning, matched to children's needs. Leaders demonstrate capacity to continue to drive improvements to increase the proportion of children both achieving and exceeding a good level of development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the opportunities for pupils to write at a greater depth are further developed and consolidated
- leaders of the foundation curriculum subjects are given more opportunities to develop their leadership skills and the teaching and learning in their 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 Telford and Wrekin. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Foulkes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the senior leadership team, the business manager, middle leaders and a group of governors. I met with a school improvement adviser brokered from the Severn Teaching School Alliance. I observed pupils around the school and in their classes. I visited classes, undertook joint learning walks with middle leaders and looked at books. I also met with six pupils to seek their views of the school. I met parents at the start of the school day.

I took account of the 15 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including 13 free-text responses, and the 28 responses to the staff survey. I reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the single central record, the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plan, several school policy documents, minutes of governing body meetings and the procedures for keeping pupils safe. I also checked the school's website.