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18 June 2021

Miss Helen Emmett  
Heron Park Primary Academy  
Dallington Road  
Hampden Park  
Eastbourne  
East Sussex  
BN22 9EE

Dear Miss Emmett

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Heron Park Primary Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 8 June 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.**

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that teaching assistants have a secure understanding of how to support pupils in key stage 1 who have fallen behind in their reading.

## **Context**

A new deputy headteacher and two assistant headteachers have been appointed since the last section 5 inspection. Four new 'phase' leaders with responsibility for early years, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 have also been appointed. The trust's director of education continues to support the school on a part-time basis.

## **Main findings**

Since the previous inspection, you and your staff have been determined to improve the school. You have recruited several senior and middle leaders and formed a more stable and motivated staff team. Your plans for improvement have been interrupted because of difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, you are now getting back on track with these plans. You recognise that further changes are needed so that leaders' plans clearly indicate when actions will be completed and how leaders will measure their success.

You have ensured that subject leaders understand their roles and what is required of them. The high-quality training they have had has helped subject leaders to redesign the curriculum. In a growing proportion of subjects, such as English and art and design, this means pupils are learning and remembering more. Leaders recognise that this is not yet as effective in all subjects.

You and your staff have prioritised improving reading. More pupils are beginning to enjoy reading. Older pupils, in particular, have an increasingly developed knowledge of different types of books and authors. Teachers have received training in phonics and this helps them to ensure that most pupils get off to a good start in learning to read. However, teaching assistants do not yet support pupils who have fallen behind in their reading well enough. Consequently, pupils who need extra help in learning to read do not catch up quickly enough.

Pupils are very enthusiastic about their school. They enjoy coming to school and feel well looked after by staff. Pupils enjoy taking part in a variety of clubs, such as football, hockey and ballet. They feel safe and feel that the school has changed a lot over the past two years. Many pupils feel that pupils' behaviour has improved and that their lessons are calm and purposeful. I observed pupils in lessons behaving sensibly, paying attention and trying their best. I also saw pupils move around the school calmly and behave respectfully towards each other.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works with staff, parents and external agencies to carefully craft extra support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders monitor this support effectively and make

changes when things are not working as well as they should. Consequently, pupils with SEND have their needs met increasingly well.

Governors have undertaken training to strengthen their understanding of how well leaders are improving the school. This has helped them to improve the way that they monitor improvements. Governors have also found the trust's support useful in helping them to challenge leaders more effectively.

### **Additional support**

The trust provides well-received and effective support to you, your staff and governors. This includes organising training for staff from within the trust and also from outside agencies. The trust has worked closely with the local authority to provide helpful, expert advice to subject leaders about improving the curriculum.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you, other senior leaders, staff, members of the governing body, the multi-academy chief executive officer and the director of education from the trust to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's improvement plan. I visited lessons, with a senior leader, to observe learning. I also spoke to a group of pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of the Aurora Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for East Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Harry Ingham  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**