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Mark Anderson
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Dear Mr Anderson

Short inspection of Huntingtower Community Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 10 May 2016, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in October 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained a good quality of education in the school since the last inspection, and the school is continuing to improve. You and your leadership team have remained vigilant to any decline in pupils' outcomes and taken steps to address these. A good example is the school's reaction to a dip in attainment in reading in key stages 1 and 2 in 2015 and the positive impact that this action has had on improving pupils' outcomes this year. School leaders responded quickly to promote reading in all age groups across the school, recognising that reading is a skill developed over many years and not only relevant at the end of each key stage. During a meeting that I held with pupils from Year 6, their passion for reading became clear. A project comparing popular novels with films inspired by those books had left pupils full of excitement and with an appetite to read more. Pupils offered informative reviews of novels that they had read, and had learned much about the importance of inspiring a reader's imagination through thoughtful word choices. Work in pupils' books confirms that this action is improving pupils' writing and they are making strong progress as a result.

Since the last inspection, the school has become an academy and accommodated growing numbers. The school is popular and over-subscribed, but one parent I spoke with said that this had not affected the quality of education for her child during that time. Other parents explained how members of your team have supported them and their children in times of need. This caring approach to pupils

and their families is evident in all aspects of school life, but is reflected particularly strongly in pupils' conduct towards adults and each other.

Pupils are proud of their school and wholeheartedly believe in the school's motto, REACH (Respect Expect Aspire Care Honest). Their consistently high attendance levels show that they enjoy coming to school. As a Year 6 pupil explained to me, 'The teachers are very motivating. They will challenge you to do the best you can and that encourages us to challenge ourselves.' However, teachers are not consistently quick enough in identifying pupils' emerging learning needs during lessons.

Senior leaders and governors have addressed the areas for improvement identified during the last inspection of the predecessor school. They are not complacent about school improvement because they are ambitious for every pupil, regardless of their ability or background. The school's plans for further improvement are appropriate but, at times, there is not enough attention to detail to ensure that actions taken are fully effective and that those responsible are clearly identifiable.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and that records are detailed. Leaders analyse incident records to ensure that the school does not become complacent about safety. Staff and governors undertake regular safeguarding training, and this is supported by effective policies. Governors understand their responsibilities and ensure that key leaders are monitoring and improving safeguarding systems and procedures on a regular basis.

Parents and pupils believe that the school is a safe place. They talk of incidents of poor behaviour, bullying or name-calling being very rare because of pupils' positive attitudes towards each other. Parents say that teachers and members of the school's pastoral team inform them of any issues and address these quickly and effectively. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations.

Inspection findings

- School leaders and governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. You and your leadership team have created a comprehensive plan that outlines key priorities for improving the school further. However, the plan is not precise enough to ensure that individual leaders and members of staff can be held fully to account for their roles in necessary improvements. The plan is also not exact enough in identifying the expected outcomes, and this makes it more difficult for leaders and governors to assess the impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Senior leaders keep governors well informed about pupils' performance. Governors ask challenging questions and undertake their own monitoring of the school to ensure that they have an accurate view of all aspects of school life. They have an effective committee structure that helps them to focus on particular aspects of the school. For example, the Curriculum, Standards and

Effectiveness Committee not only reviews pupils' outcomes but also considers how effectively the school's finances are being used to support pupils. The early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 have their own assigned governor. This has further increased the amount and detail of governors' knowledge about each of these areas and enabled governors to ask more probing questions of senior leaders.

- Leaders have taken prompt and effective action to raise pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in response to a drop in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels of attainment in key stages 1 and 2 in 2015. They have made this action a whole-school priority, linking it to teachers' performance management arrangements.
- Teachers plan more opportunities for pupils to undertake extended reading and writing tasks. As a result, pupils are practising their new and existing writing skills and extending their range of vocabulary more often. These actions are ensuring that pupils can share their knowledge and learning as effectively on paper as they do verbally. Work in books shows that this approach is having a significant effect because it is placing higher expectations on what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able.
- Work in pupils' mathematics books shows that pupils are expected to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills regularly. Pupils show their developing reasoning skills by explaining their methods and why they have chosen to use them. Pupils' work, including that of the most able, shows that they are increasingly confident in using their existing knowledge of number facts and calculation strategies when faced with mathematical problems. For example, in Year 2, pupils were able to explain how they used their knowledge of multiplication facts and techniques to check their answers to problems involving division.
- Children enter the early years at levels of development that are below those which are typical for their age. In 2015, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was below average. However, this is not typical. Current teacher assessment and evidence in children's learning journey development records suggest that a higher-than-average proportion of children will achieve a good level of development by the end of the current year. By the end of both key stages 1 and 2, published performance information shows that pupils' attainment is broadly average. Pupils spoken with during the inspection showed well-developed knowledge covering a range of subjects, often using appropriate vocabulary, particularly in relation to grammar and mathematics. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including the most able, are making strong progress this year. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability are progressing at least as well as other pupils. However, there are occasions when teachers do not respond quickly enough to pupils' learning needs during lessons. In these situations, pupils' learning is not progressing as fast as it could.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and at different times of the school day is often exemplary. British values such as respect, tolerance, collaboration and cooperation are ever-present because the school's values are communicated effectively by school staff and well understood by pupils and parents. By the time that pupils reach Year 6, they are able to have well-developed

conversations about their learning and can express mature and well-informed opinions. For example, while pupils are unanimous that they do not like the graffiti close to the school grounds, they are able to discuss its merits as an art form, with one pupil explaining how the colours and designs can be 'mesmerising'. Pupils relish the range of responsibilities on offer and believe that their opinions make a difference, giving the school's use of solar panels to supply its energy requirements as an example. The school's use of the curriculum to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that they are very well prepared for life beyond their primary school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans for school improvement are more precise in identifying those responsible for implementing and overseeing actions, key dates and the expected impact of actions on raising pupils' outcomes
- teachers adapt tasks more effectively to suit pupils of differing abilities, by responding more quickly to the emerging learning needs of pupils during lessons.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen McMullan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met you, the deputy headteacher, both assistant headteachers, three governors, parents and a group of pupils from Year 6. I considered responses of parents from Parent View, the school's parental questionnaire and questionnaires from staff and pupils. You, the deputy headteacher and I visited all classes in the school, spending a short time in each, and we looked at a sample of pupils' work together. I looked at a range of documents, including an evaluation of the school's performance and plans for further improvement, information on how the pupil premium is spent and a number of policy documents, including those for child protection and special educational needs.