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Stefanie Hanson
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Dear Miss Hanson

Short inspection of Heatherley Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 October 2017, 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 December 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are currently acting as headteacher while the substantive headteacher is on maternity leave. The strong partnership with a local school and the support of an associate headteacher have ensured continuity and stability for the school. You have demonstrated that your collective expectations are high. All leaders and staff have a sense of pride and commitment to the school and are proud to model the school's values. As one member of the team explained, 'We all share the same wish to make Heatherley a fantastic school.' This ambition is felt throughout the school. All the adults are striving to ensure that all pupils achieve, make progress and attain the very best they can.

Since the previous inspection there has been a great deal of change. You and other senior leaders have worked with the new middle leaders and the governing body to address the emerging weaknesses in the school and have ensured that the strengths are sustained. For example, you recognised that, although attainment was high, this did not always mean that pupils had made good progress. You are successfully addressing this to ensure that all pupils make rapid and sustained progress.

Changes to leadership and staffing meant that the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report have not been tackled quickly enough. These areas are now being addressed at speed and with thoroughness. A good example of this

is how you have worked with your partner schools to develop your middle leaders, who are now knowledgeable, enthusiastic and keen to further develop their skills.

They have worked closely with senior leaders to halt the decline in progress and to improve attainment. The impact of this work can be seen in pupils' improving progress and attainment across the school. In the early years, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development at the end of 2017 was above the national average, as was the proportion of pupils in Year 1 who reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check. At the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national averages. At the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading and writing was in line with the national averages, while attainment in mathematics was above.

Parents who spoke with the inspector are confident that their children make good progress, are well cared for and are safe. They value the care that the staff take to help their children succeed. The vast majority of parents say that the school communicates well with them. They appreciate the effort put in by staff to ensure that their children make a successful transition to secondary school. A small minority of parents, however, feel that there is more to be done to improve communication. They would like to receive more information about the school's approach to improvement and to get a timely response to their concerns from leaders. The school is a positive place to learn. Pupils quickly settle down to well-planned learning activities. In the classrooms and playground areas, pupils feel safe and take a pride in their learning and behaviour. During my visits to the classrooms, they were keen to show me what they were learning. Pupils are well-mannered, polite and friendly. They look very smart in their uniform and are proud to belong to this inclusive school.

The governing body has a new, highly ambitious chair who is holding school leaders to account to ensure that improvements continue. The governing body has reviewed and refined its processes. You are working in partnership with them to ensure that the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning are fit for purpose. The chair has undertaken training and understands his strategic role well. He has regular discussions with leaders to check on their progress against the actions in the detailed school improvement plan.

There are variations between the progress made by girls and that of boys. As a result of the actions that you and the team are now taking, girls are now making better progress in key stage 2 mathematics and boys' progress in writing has improved. You have successfully addressed the weaker progress that pupils made in reading. The progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also improving overall.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. You and the leaders responsible for safeguarding are very clear that safeguarding is of the highest priority for you and members of your school community. Staff understand the legal

guidance and know how to report and follow up any child protection or safeguarding concerns. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are diligently and securely kept. Leaders are tenacious in following up concerns and ensuring that external agencies are involved where appropriate. You take a pride in caring for the pupils and their welfare.

The pupils who I met during my visit were able to tell me that they enjoyed school and felt safe. All stated that if they had a worry or a concern they were able to talk to their teacher or another adult in the school. Pupils were also able to tell me of the good things and some bad things about the internet. They spoke positively and with pride about their school and stated that if there was bullying they would know what to do.

Inspection findings

- Current leaders know their school well and have the capacity to improve it further. You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. There are now more opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to practise their writing skills and progress in writing is accelerating. A higher proportion of the most able pupils achieved higher standards in writing at the end of key stage 2 than was the case nationally. Boys are making better progress than previously. They do not, however, make the same rapid progress as girls in this area.
- Leaders have worked effectively with colleagues from local schools to increase the opportunities for teachers to share and learn from best practice. These initiatives have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment while creating opportunities for teachers to develop their leadership skills. Where you have identified performance that was less than good, you have taken swift action to address it.
- You and the substantive headteacher explained to me that there have been some challenges within key stage 1 due to staffing instability. You took quick action to address this and put in place measures to address subject and group differences in achievement. For example, you have changed the teaching arrangements in the classes so that teachers with in-depth knowledge of the pupils have continued to teach them. The measures you put in place were comprehensive and have ensured that pupils in key stage 1 are now making better progress.
- Pupils, including the majority of disadvantaged pupils, are now making at least good progress and some are now achieving at greater depth. Leaders and staff know what the main barriers to learning are for disadvantaged pupils and work effectively to reduce them. Intervention strategies are in place to help this small group of pupils in the school to attain their very best.
- Support for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective in helping these pupils to fulfil their potential. Support staff are skilled in promoting and modelling effective learning strategies for pupils. They plan their work in partnership with the teachers and outside agency specialists. This enables them to anticipate which aspects of learning pupils may find difficult and

help them with this in advance of the lesson. This approach enables the pupils to develop the resilience to tackle more challenging work. Some teaching assistants are particularly skilled and experienced in supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities with phonics and reading as well as in supporting children who have communication difficulties.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- differences in the progress made by girls and boys, particularly in English and mathematics at key stage 2, are reduced
- the impact of middle leaders is further developed to embed and secure effective school improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Gary Nixon
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the senior leadership team, the substantive headteacher who voluntarily came into school, and the associate headteacher from Holly Primary School. We discussed and agreed the areas of focus for the inspection. I undertook joint observations of learning with you and with the substantive headteacher. I spoke with leaders responsible for safeguarding and discussed child protection and safeguarding arrangements with a group of staff. I met with the chair of the governing body. I spoke with senior and middle leaders about teaching, learning and assessment. I observed pupils walking around the school, participating in an assembly and at playtime outside. I spoke with a group of teaching assistants, all middle leaders and a group of pupils.

I considered the 23 responses posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and considered the school's own data in this regard. I also took into account the 16 responses to the online staff questionnaire. In addition, I considered a range of documents including those relating to the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of the governing body, pupils' performance information, staff appraisal information, the single central record and other safeguarding information. I reviewed personal learning plans for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during breaktimes. I examined the school's website to check that it meets the requirements for the publication of specified information.