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Mrs Helen Ward
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Dear Mrs Ward

Short inspection of Hazeldene School

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 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 January 2016.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. There have been considerable changes over the past three years. The school is now an established part of a federation with two other local schools. You continue to oversee the school's growth and transition from a lower school to a primary school. Current Year 6 pupils will be the first to sit the end-of-key-stage-2 national assessments. There are now 90 additional pupils, four more teachers, three more learning supports assistants, an additional senior leader and a new chair of the governing body. There are also four additional classrooms. Inspection evidence demonstrates that, despite these changes, the school remains a happy one in which pupils and staff achieve well together. All staff who responded to the Ofsted survey agreed that they are proud and happy to work at Hazeldene School.

Parents told me that their children like learning at school. Pupils I spoke with wholeheartedly agreed. They explained that the school's values serve as reminders of the importance of friendship and generosity in their daily lives. All pupils who responded to the online survey agreed that the school encourages them to respect people from differing backgrounds and treat everyone equally. Hazeldene School is one in which relationships are characterised by respect and good humour.

You are rightly proud of how well pupils behave. You and your staff model the behaviour you expect of pupils. Very many pupils conduct themselves in an orderly, respectful way. Adults provide patient and effective support to the few pupils who, on occasion, find it hard to make the right behaviour choices. Inspection evidence

demonstrates that you draw upon expert external help where these pupils need it. Pupils told me how much they appreciate the time and support they are given, especially by the school's learning mentor. Almost all parents agree that the school ensures that pupils behave well.

You have made it a priority to ensure that parents are well informed about and, where possible, included in their children's education. You are being successful in this aim. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and its staff. Parents explained that their children grow in confidence and make strong academic and social progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) commented on staff's dedication and professionalism in supporting their children's needs. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that they receive valuable information about their children's progress. Similarly, a very high proportion would recommend the school to other parents.

As the school has grown, you have improved the quality of subject leadership. Subject leaders are increasingly effective in their work. They share your commitment to provide pupils with a rich, enjoyable curriculum. These leaders are knowledgeable about their subjects and value the opportunities to work with other leaders from within the federation. A few subject leaders, however, some of whom are new to their roles, do not yet have a precise grasp of the impact of the curriculum changes they have introduced.

You carefully check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and provide teachers with appropriate support and guidance. The impact of this aspect of your work is evident in the good progress children make in the early years. The proportion achieving a good level of development was above the national average in 2018. Since the previous inspection, pupils have continued to make good progress by the end of key stage 1. The proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in each of reading, writing and mathematics have been at least in line with, and often above, those found nationally. The support you have put in place for teachers in key stage 2 is also resulting in good or improving teaching, learning and assessment over time.

The governing body is thorough in checking the quality of education and holding leaders to account. Governors choose to visit the school as part of their carefully thought out cycle of support and challenge. They review their own effectiveness and make suitable amendments to their activities and committee structures. Therefore, the governing body is well placed to provide strategic leadership and fulfil its declared role as critical friend to school leaders.

Governors check the progress pupils in each year group make in reading, writing and mathematics. The governing body also scrutinises in considerable detail how well the school provides for pupils with SEND. Governors understand the aims and breadth of the curriculum. They are rightly acting to ensure that they check quality across all subjects with the same precision they do for English and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have placed the highest priority on safeguarding pupils and have established secure, effective systems to ensure that pupils are well cared for. Adults make sure that when pupils need help, they receive it. Governors are diligent in ensuring that this is the case.

Pupils feel safe and they are safe in school. Pupils receive a wide-ranging programme of personal, social and health education activities throughout the curriculum. Because of this they are well placed to judge potential risks to their well-being and safety, including when using the internet. Almost all pupils who responded to the online survey agreed that the school encourages them to look after their mental, physical and emotional health.

Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of what bullying is and how this differs from falling-out between friends. Pupils told me that bullying is a rare event at their school. They also said that when it does happen adults sort it out quickly. Most parents and all staff agree the school deals well with bullying.

The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children are safe in school. One parent's comment that 'our children are safe and happy here' was typical of the views of others spoken with on the day of the inspection.

Leaders provide staff and governors with appropriate safeguarding training and make sure they receive regular updates. Consequently, staff are well informed about safeguarding matters, including the government's 'Prevent' duty and County Lines. Staff are also alert to the changes in behaviour, appearance or mood that indicate a pupil may be at risk. Staff explained that leaders deal well with any concerns that are passed on to them.

Leaders make sure necessary checks are carried out on people working at the school. Governors rightly assure themselves that the record of these checks is accurately maintained.

Inspection findings

- To determine whether the school continues to offer a good quality of education I wanted to establish whether pupils make good progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. The development of the curriculum was identified as an area for improvement in the previous inspection report. Leaders have also made improving the curriculum an ongoing priority in their school development planning.
- After the previous inspection, leaders rightly reviewed the curriculum's content, breadth and learning activities. They asked themselves, 'What will we teach, in what order, and how will we make sure it is taught well?' This process has resulted in leaders designing a curriculum that serves pupils well in many subjects.

- In early years, leaders make sure there is a suitable emphasis on each prime area of learning – communication and language; personal, social and emotional development and physical development. Children enthusiastically seek answers to the questions they are encouraged to ask. For example, children were keen to tell me their correct answers to their questions, 'Why are plant roots often white?' and 'Why did our grass grow sideways?' Inspection evidence demonstrates that children are developing into inquisitive, interested and successful learners.
- Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 told me they thoroughly enjoy topics such as 'Frozen lands' and 'Fire, fire!' In many classes teachers implement the components of these topics admirably. Pupils build up and draw upon their knowledge and skills to good effect, in science for example. However, some teachers are less confident, less well trained and less accomplished when teaching geography and, in some classes, history. Where this is the case, pupils' progress is not as impressive, including those who are most-able.
- My second line of enquiry was to ascertain how well pupils achieve in reading, writing and mathematics across the new upper key stage 2 classes. Leaders' careful planning has ensured that the good quality of education pupils receive has continued into the new Year 5 and 6 classes. Leaders appointed teachers with experience of teaching upper key stage 2 and accessed appropriate support from the local authority and the federation. As a result, leaders, teachers and governors have an accurate understanding of the standards required in upper key stage 2.
- Teachers told me that the training they have received has improved their mathematics teaching. Pupils explained how much they enjoyed learning mathematics. Several pupils echoed their classmate's comment that their teacher's clear explanation, 'helps me get the hang of mathematics quickly'. Pupils develop a solid understanding of mathematical concepts and apply this knowledge well. Most-able pupils respond confidently to the suitably challenging work they are presented with. Pupils typically make good progress in mathematics.
- Because of the training they have received, teachers have thorough subject knowledge in English and use this to teach reading and writing effectively over time. They plan and implement learning activities that enable pupils to develop their understanding and use of increasingly complex vocabulary. Many pupils make good progress in both reading and writing in upper key stage 2.
- My final line of enquiry was to establish how well pupils who need additional support are provided for. The provision for pupils with SEND is well led. Leaders ensure that reasonable adjustments are made so that pupils have every opportunity to succeed. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is quick to identify pupils' needs and put in place well-judged support which helps pupils make good progress socially and academically.
- Learning support assistants play their full part in providing pupils with the support they need. They have high expectations of the pupils they work with. These adults use their precise knowledge of pupils' capabilities and requirements to offer a suitable balance of challenge and support. Importantly, learning

support assistants know when to adjust the help they provide so that pupils with SEND develop more confidence and resilience in their learning.

- Leaders are making increasingly effective use of the funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders determined that pupils in key stage 2 needed additional support to improve the breadth of their vocabulary and their subject knowledge in mathematics. Through improved teaching and the provision of reading clubs, and additional mathematics support, these pupils are catching up. Nevertheless, work remains to be done so that a few disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 attain the standards of which they are capable.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- subject leaders gain a clearer grasp of the impact of the curriculum changes they have introduced
- teachers develop their subject knowledge and effectiveness in delivering the history and geography curriculum
- all disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 continue to catch up and achieve the standards of which they are capable.

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

Yours sincerely

John Lucas
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

You and I discussed the key lines of enquiry for this inspection, leaders' evaluation of the quality of education, school improvement plans and information about current pupils' learning.

I met with: you and all other members of the senior team; seven subject leaders; a member of the administration team; the SENCo and three teaching assistants; and the chair of the governing body and three other governors. I also met with two representatives of the local authority and held a telephone conversation with the local authority's chief education officer.

I examined the school's self-evaluation document, leaders' analysis of the progress pupils make, and pupil premium reports. The school's safeguarding arrangements,

records, files and documentation were examined. I also considered documentation relating to the school's provision for pupils with SEND.

Together with you, I observed pupils' learning in nine classes. We looked at pupils' work to explore the progress they are making over time. I also heard pupils read. I met with a group of pupils and with others informally during lessons. I considered the 36 responses to the pupil online survey. All of these responses were from pupils in Year 6.

I considered the views of parents I spoke with at the start of the school day. I took into account the views of 78 parents who responded on Parent View and the 37 comments on the Parent View free-text service. I also considered the views expressed in two emails received on the day of the inspection, as well as those in the school's own surveys and records of communication with parents.

I also took into account the 36 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.