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26 March 2019

Mrs Susan Bridges
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bridges

Short inspection of Hucklow Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 March 2019 with Linda Griffiths, Ofsted Inspector, 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 February 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since your appointment as executive headteacher in September 2017, you have made rapid and effective improvements to the school. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning and the standards pupils achieve are quickly improving across the school.

You and the head of school are dedicated and motivational leaders. You are very well supported by an able leadership team and effective trust and governing boards. You have galvanised leaders at all levels. There is a palpable team ethos across the school. Middle leaders are very committed in their pursuit of high-quality teaching and support for all pupils. They are beginning to play an important role in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Staff care deeply about the pupils and their families. Staff work hard to ensure that all families are included. The inclusion team is very skilled and has a deep knowledge of the pupils and their additional needs. The team monitors the effect of the interventions taken to support pupils and uses this information reflectively to plan next steps. As a result, the needs of the pupils are met well.

Pupils are polite, well mannered and keen to share their work. During the inspection, pupils were very excited to quote lines from 'Macbeth' that they had just learned in a recent Shakespeare topic. Pupils are attentive in class and show positive learning behaviours. Pupils spoken with were unanimous in their praise of the school, the

support their teachers gave them and the inclusive nature of the school. The majority of pupils who responded to Ofsted's pupil survey said that they would recommend the school to a friend moving to the area.

At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to make sure teachers were planning work that was at the right level of difficulty for the most able pupils. You have achieved this well. There is a rising three-year trend in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard at the end of key stage 2, with attainment being above the national averages in writing and reading. Evidence in pupils' workbooks shows that teachers think carefully about the work that is planned to ensure that all pupils, including the most able, are challenged. Pupils' workbooks also clearly show where misconceptions and errors have been identified by teachers, in line with the school policy. There are effective interventions, which have a positive effect on the quality of pupils' subsequent work.

Leaders were also asked to ensure a consistent approach in early years across the Nursery and Reception. The Reception learning environment is a vibrant and purposeful area that fosters children's love of learning. In both Nursery and Reception, activities are planned that challenge the children and develop their independence. Children want to discuss their learning and are proud to share their accomplishments. During the inspection, one child, for example, was thrilled to be able to show his plant pot that he had decorated in a gardening topic.

Children in the early years make a very strong start to school. They achieve well, from starting points that are below those typical for their age, due to carefully planned learning activities that inspire and motivate them to learn. The outdoor learning environment is used very effectively to develop children's physical and social skills. The school has a considerable proportion of children who are new to speaking English, and therefore the development of children's language has been a priority for all staff. Adults in the early years ensure that children develop their confidence to initiate conversations with adults and other children.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Together, you have established a strong safeguarding culture, because you and your staff care deeply about every individual. Recruitment checks on the suitability of staff working in the school are thorough. Frequent training updates, reflecting the latest guidance, are shared regularly with staff. This ensures that they know precisely what to do if they are concerned about a pupil. Systematic record-keeping, which is detailed and thorough, is in place. Swift and appropriate action is taken when incidents are reported, including referral to social services when necessary. Follow-up to these referrals is rigorous, reflecting leaders' determination to ensure the best for all pupils and their families.

Pupils say that they feel safe in the school and are confident that staff will help them if they have any worries or problems. Valuable opportunities are provided for pupils

to learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, the local police community support officer led an age-appropriate assembly on knife crime.

Pupils are confident about how to keep themselves safe online. The pupils with whom I spoke reported that they feel safe and secure in the school. They know that they should speak to a trusted adult if they feel worried. Pupils are very confident that adults in the school will listen to any concerns that they have. Some pupils indicated that name calling happens infrequently, but that bullying does not happen. Pupils show a strong empathy for other pupils and the consequences of behaviour choices, with one pupil saying, 'When people fall out, the teachers give a logical consequence that's fair.'

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry. The first of these was to look at how phonics is being taught in key stage 1 and what leaders are doing to support those pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 or Year 2. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that phonics teaching in key stage 1 is strong. All teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of how to teach phonics and, as a result, they support pupils to learn effectively. Where necessary, teaching is quickly reshaped to provide the right support and challenge to pupils.
- The phonics leader has a detailed overview of the quality of phonics teaching in the school and has ensured that all staff are well trained. The leader closely monitors the progress of the pupils who do not achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Years 1 and 2. However, pupils often have gaps in their phonics knowledge when they move into key stage 2. Consequently, some of these pupils find reading challenging and find it difficult to engage with reading for enjoyment. The school has put a reading strategy in place that is beginning to have an impact on the majority of pupils. However, it has had less impact on those pupils in key stage 2 who have low prior attainment in reading.
- We considered whether the high attainment in writing, reflected in outcomes at the end of key stage 2 for the past three years, was evident in pupils' work across the curriculum. Writing is clearly a strength. Pupils have developed a love of writing. This was illustrated by a boy who was desperate to talk to us about how much he loves writing stories. Pupils write for a clear purpose, which makes their learning meaningful. Parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning through the specific subject-related vocabulary which is sent home for parents to discuss with their children. Indications are that this is also encouraging pupils to share their achievements with their families.
- Pupils benefit from many opportunities to develop their language skills. Teachers plan learning which embeds language development within a rich and meaningful curriculum. Pupils in Year 6 could talk with confidence about Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. They said, 'It isn't the only theory, there are theories about a comet hitting the earth and other religious theories'. This illustrated that pupils are challenged to think deeply about their learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils who do not meet the standard expected for their age in phonics receive the right support to address gaps in their phonic knowledge so that they become fluent readers
- the school's reading strategy supports all pupils, including those with low prior attainment, to enjoy and engage in reading.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing board, the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sheffield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Eve Morris
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met with you, the head of school and members of your leadership team. We also met with representatives from the school's governing and trust boards and spoke to a representative from the local authority. We discussed the work of the school, including the procedures in place for safeguarding. Teaching in all classes was observed. Pupils were asked about their learning, and work was checked in their workbooks. We talked to pupils at the breakfast club and at lunchtime to gather their views about the school and pupils' behaviour, and to determine whether they felt safe in the school.

We looked at a range of school documents, including the school's own information about pupils' achievement. The school's evaluation of its work was reviewed, together with different action plans. Responses from discussions with parents were taken into account. Over 40 staff and pupil views, submitted through Ofsted surveys, were also considered.