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Mrs Kay Church
Executive headteacher
Hannah More Infant School
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Dear Mrs Church

Short inspection of Hannah More Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 16 May 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 April 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As leaders and governors you are much closer now to realising your vision for the federation of Hannah More Infant School and its partner junior school. You have built a strong team of specialist leaders across the federation and this is helping you to address priorities swiftly and effectively. You and governors have a clear action plan to continue making improvements. Together with a skilled group of teachers you have, as one parent wrote, worked 'to place the interests of children at the core of decisions'. This comment reflected the views of other parents.

Pupils are confident learners. They behave very well and take great pride in their work. You encourage pupils to be active, to discuss their learning and to make some decisions for themselves about how to improve their work. You support pupils to try out their skills in real situations. For example, a group of pupils entered a 500-word national writing competition. On World Book Day the older pupils used their mathematical knowledge and writing skills to run a book stall.

At the time of the previous inspection you were asked to improve the challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics lessons. You were also asked to encourage pupils to develop their ideas more fully in writing. Standards in all subjects have remained high at the end of Year 2 since the previous inspection and pupils' progress overall has been good. However, you have not been complacent, but rather continued to strive for improvement. Recently you have focused strongly on

improving teaching as a whole as well as developing the quality of teaching in mathematics and writing. As a result, teaching is now more consistently effective than at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers now assess pupils' work more confidently against the new curriculum. They carefully check pupils' understanding in lessons and change the teaching if need be. You regularly discuss pupils' progress and adjust plans for pupils who need more help, but equally for those who need extra challenge. However, you are rightly continuing to develop the teaching of mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

This is a caring school where pupils are known as individuals and their needs are well met. Parents value the school as a safe place where their children can develop their confidence. Staff are vigilant for pupils' safety and act responsibly to report any concerns to senior leaders. The school works closely with a range of agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families are well supported.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school carries out pre-employment checks to ensure that adults working with pupils are safe to do so. Although leaders had not made a timely response to one aspect of recruitment guidance, this has now been completed and records are of a high quality. Governors update policies and risk assessments regularly in line with the latest guidelines. They discuss safeguarding policy and practice frequently with leaders and make regular checks. However, these checks are not recorded comprehensively enough to highlight whether the need for further improvements has been identified.

Pupils feel very safe in school. One pupil described the best thing about the school as being 'We all play fairly and work together as a team.' They know that teachers will help them with problems and have confidence in the support they have at lunchtime from midday supervisors. Pupils are taught how to stay safe on the internet and know not to share passwords or give out personal information.

Inspection findings

- In this inspection I firstly looked at the impact of improved mathematics teaching on the progress of all pupils. In particular, we looked at the achievement of boys and also at disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In lessons and workbooks, we could see that boys and girls have good skills in arithmetic and in recalling number facts and multiplication tables.
- Pupils are successful in mathematics lessons where they solve problems. Their work shows that, in all classes, an increasing number of pupils are now working at the higher standard. However, you recognise that teachers do not routinely question pupils at a level which would prompt pupils' deeper mathematical thinking and reasoning skills. You have recently appointed a new specialist leader for mathematics and further opportunities for staff development are planned.
- You and governors demonstrate ambition for disadvantaged pupils and the additional funding is well used to support their achievement. Disadvantaged pupils are making equally good progress in mathematics as in other subjects.

Teachers challenge pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to take part in the class learning in mathematics lessons but match the work closely to their needs. These pupils are also making good progress, as could be seen from their workbooks.

- My next line of enquiry was to follow up on pupils' progress in writing, particularly the progress of girls and the most able pupils. Children start in the Reception class with widely varying levels of development. However, for all children, writing is typically the least well-developed skill when starting school. Now, following discussions with local nurseries and pre-schools, you are working with them to tackle this. As a result, children are off to a stronger start in gaining skills in, for example, pencil control. By adopting a more consistent approach to teaching spelling and grammar, you have improved the accuracy of pupils' work across the school.
- Teachers now work together to assess writing across the whole primary age range. This has raised expectations of what pupils can achieve in each year group. Through using examples of high-quality writing, teachers encourage pupils to aspire to be good writers. Together we looked at some writing of the Year 2 most able girls where the class had written descriptively about chameleons. By using lively vocabulary and a range of sentence styles, these pupils had made their writing enjoyable to read. They had used accurate punctuation to add emphasis and their handwriting was fluent and well formed. Almost all pupils are now writing at the expected standard and more pupils, like these girls, are writing at a standard higher than that expected for their age.
- Over time, the school has developed pupils' phonic knowledge very effectively. However, a recent dip in standards led to this becoming my third line of enquiry. Over the past year you have taken action on two levels. Firstly, you put in additional training for all staff. You then increased the support for pupils who had not reached the standard in the phonics screening check when in Year 1. By reading with those pupils and checking their work, I could see that they are now catching up.
- Teachers deepen pupils' knowledge of phonics by ensuring that pupils regularly practise writing the letter sounds as well as reading them. In the Reception classes we saw children using their phonic knowledge to write simple sentences about butterflies. The school's latest assessment information shows that almost all pupils in the current Year 1 have the phonic skills expected for their age.
- Finally, I looked at how the school is tackling pupils' absence. Attendance was lower last year than the national average. Although attendance figures have improved this year, the rate of attendance for disadvantaged pupils remains low. You take effective action to ensure that pupils are safe when they do not arrive for school. You involve other agencies well to support and challenge families to improve individual pupils' attendance.
- We found that attendance for a group is, on occasions, lowered by the absence of a few pupils. However, you do not yet regularly analyse attendance information to verify that this is the case, or to identify unusual patterns of absence. Consequently, there is currently no clear strategy for improving the attendance of this group by, for instance, using the pupil premium.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers deepen pupils' mathematical understanding so that all pupils achieve their potential in mathematics
- attendance rates are high for all groups of pupils
- governors fully record the checks they make on safeguarding so that further actions are identified and can be acted on by leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Wendy Marriott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I had meetings with you and your senior leaders. Together we visited all classrooms and spoke to pupils as they were working. I also spoke to pupils in a discussion group and at lunchtime. With your assessment leader, we discussed the current assessments of pupils across the school and looked at examples of their work in English and in mathematics. I also read with a group of pupils. I met with a small group of governors and, with them and with you, discussed the school's plans for improvement. I spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone. Over the day, I discussed safeguarding with you, your business manager and several members of staff. I evaluated documentation in relation to safeguarding. The views of a number of parents were gathered through their responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also took account of the views of the staff who responded to the online staff questionnaire.