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5 April 2019

Mrs Jayne Winnard
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Winnard

Short inspection of Heather Garth Primary School Academy

Following my visit to the school on 27 March 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 March 2015.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You have made significant changes to many aspects of the school. Displays of pupils' work provide good examples of the quality of work you expect to see. You have created a school environment that is attractive and purposeful. You are working hard to raise the aspirations of the pupils and you have developed a supportive leadership team to help you to reach these goals. Together, you have created a strong team ethic among staff, who enjoy working at the school and appreciate that you allow them to be innovative in their approaches. The plans you have produced to improve the school are detailed but are not focused closely enough on the most important priorities. Professional development opportunities are not aligned well enough with these priorities. As a result, some of the actions you have taken to improve the school have not yet had the chance to improve outcomes for pupils in reading and mathematics.

You have worked hard to develop links with the community. Parents are supportive of the school and say that their children are happy to come to school. Parents feel that teachers provide good support for their children. Pupils are well behaved. They are polite and move sensibly around the building. In lessons, pupils are rarely

disruptive, and take part in lessons enthusiastically. They are supportive of one another and are confident when offering their ideas in class discussions. During the previous inspection, inspectors identified that leaders needed to ensure that school improvement objectives were precise and were linked more comprehensively to the achievement of pupils. You have written detailed plans that link closely to your self-evaluation of the school. These plans include clear timescales for your actions and identify who is responsible for carrying these out. Some of your actions are closely linked to raising achievement. However, you have not prioritised your actions well enough. As a result, the work that leaders carry out is sometimes not timely enough or does not focus precisely enough on the most important priorities.

In the previous inspection, inspectors found that you needed to increase the number of cultural elements in learning activities so that pupils gain a greater understanding of the world around them. You have reviewed your curriculum and have ensured that there are now a greater number of opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures. You make good links to the teaching of tolerance and diversity through your religious education curriculum. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the visits they receive from a member of the Sikh community. Pupils enjoy learning about different cultures, for example during your Fair-Trade Fortnight and during black history month. Pupils were able to talk to me about their studies of Nigeria and Zimbabwe and how life for children in those countries was both similar and different to their own. You have established a link with a school with high levels of cultural diversity. Pupils enjoyed a visit to the school in order to meet their new friends and discuss their beliefs and interests.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff place as a high priority the safeguarding of pupils. Safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose and are understood by all staff. As a result, staff are vigilant and know what they must do should they have any concerns. Staff understand the need to report any concerns to you or your deputy safeguarding lead and know who to talk to should they have any concerns about the conduct of adults. You liaise well with the local authority should you need any advice. You make appropriate checks to ensure that newly appointed staff are fit to work with children. Governors provide you with challenge to ensure that your safeguarding procedures are adhered to.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. Pupils understand the difference between bullying and 'falling out' and know who to speak to if they are worried. They feel that if they were to have any problems with bullying it would be addressed properly. You provide pupils with a range of opportunities in the curriculum to learn how to stay safe. They are knowledgeable about how they can stay safe online and understand what to do if they had any concerns when using the internet.

Inspection findings

- During your previous inspection, inspectors identified that you needed to raise achievement in reading in key stage 1, particularly for the most able pupils. In 2018, the progress that pupils made in reading across key stage 2 was below average and in the bottom 10% of schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher standards in reading in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 was below the national average. I wanted to find out what you are doing to improve outcomes in reading.
- You have thorough systems in place to check the attainment and progress of individuals and groups of pupils. However, this information is not checked by leaders to ensure that it is accurate. Leaders are uncertain why pupils' attainment and progress in reading is below the national average. Leaders have reviewed the way that teaching is taught and there is now more time available for the teaching of reading skills. However, checks that leaders make have not been thorough or carried out quickly enough. This means that there has not been effective support for staff to help them to improve the teaching of reading.
- When we visited lessons to watch the teaching of reading, we found that teaching assistants made a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Teaching assistants provided focused support and encouraged pupils to think carefully about the answers they gave. In some classrooms, teachers planned challenging tasks and used questioning skilfully to enable pupils to justify their answers using evidence from the text. However, this was inconsistent. Too often, the questions that teachers asked did not allow pupils to extend their answers or to draw on evidence from the texts they were reading. This meant that, often, the most able pupils were not sufficiently challenged, limiting the progress that they make.
- In 2018, the progress that pupils made in mathematics across key stage 2 was below average. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher standards in mathematics in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 was below the national average. I wanted to find out what you are doing to improve outcomes in mathematics.
- The mathematics leader works closely with colleagues from beyond the school to develop her subject knowledge. This has helped her to review and revise the approach to how mathematics is taught in school. The mathematics leader has helped teachers to use this new approach, and this is now being used more consistently across the school. However, the checks that leaders make to identify further areas of development are not regular enough and are not followed up by further support for staff. Leaders and governors identified that the most able pupils were not sufficiently challenged in mathematics during the summer term in 2018. When we looked at pupils' books, we found that there is still insufficient challenge for the most able pupils. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop their reasoning skills. Sometimes, the most able pupils complete tasks quickly and are not given tasks that are more challenging earlier in the lesson.
- I wanted to find out how effectively you use the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching

the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics has been below the national average for other pupils in recent years. You now have detailed plans in place that identify the barriers to learning for these pupils. The actions you have planned match their needs well. You provide good opportunities for parents to learn more about their child's learning. The information you provide parents about expectations in reading, writing and mathematics is useful should they need to support their child at home. Opportunities to join in with learning experiences each term are welcomed by parents. For example, parents enjoyed making bath bombs with pupils in Year 4 and 5 science lessons.

- The checks you make on the progress of these pupils throughout the year ensure that the use of this funding is regularly reviewed. As a result of your work, evidence of work in books shows that disadvantaged pupils now make similar progress to their peers.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- areas for improvement are prioritised and professional development opportunities enable staff to make the necessary improvements
- checks on the quality of teaching and learning are timely and closely matched to the school's priorities
- the attainment and progress of pupils in reading improve so that outcomes are at least in line with national averages
- the attainment and progress of pupils in mathematics, particularly for the most able, improve so that outcomes are at least in line with national averages.

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

Yours sincerely

Jaimie Holbrook
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met you and other senior leaders and explained my lines of enquiry. I also met with members of the governing body, the subject leaders for mathematics and English and the designated safeguarding leader. I reviewed the 27 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 25 free-text comments. There were 20 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff and no responses for pupils. We visited classes together in key stages 1 and 2. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, met with a group of pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current

performance and its plans for further improvement. I considered a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding. I examined the school's website to check that it meets legal requirements on the publication of specified information.