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Jonathan Millward
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Millward

Short inspection of Hunsdon Junior Mixed and Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 14 June 2018, 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 September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school has addressed all the areas for improvement highlighted at the time of the previous inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You have led the school from strength to strength since the previous inspection, which took place very soon after you took up post as headteacher. Your commitment to the whole school community shines through, and your well-established team supports you highly effectively in the school's strive for educational excellence. All staff are totally committed to the school and to ensuring that all pupils do well. The school vision statement: 'Working together; sharing ideas; planning the future; democracy; making improvements and pupil voice', is consistently reflected in the day-to-day work of the school and embodied by all stakeholders, pupils, staff, governors and parents and carers alike.

Parents I spoke to during the inspection and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire had nothing but praise for the school and, in particular, your leadership. All would recommend the school to other parents. They especially value the warm, supportive nature of the school. One parent commented, 'It's a magical school. This school is unique and led by an amazing headteacher.' Another stated, 'This is a phenomenal school where, as a family, we have been extremely happy

with the manner in which our children have been treated and taught.'

You have spent time developing the curriculum so that it sparks pupils' interests and both challenges and inspires them to learn through exciting topics including enrichment days to launch and celebrate these. For example, on World Book Day, pupils enjoyed dressing up as Shakespearean characters, linked to their learning about the Tudors. The pupils that I met with spoke enthusiastically about the range of curriculum opportunities offered to them and could recall these in detail. The rich curriculum is reflected in displays around the school, including high-quality writing and artwork. You have identified the need to further develop the curriculum so that it provides more opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces of work.

Pupils' behaviour around the school and their attitudes to learning are impeccable. Relationships between pupils and staff and each other are very strong. All staff know pupils very well. They are very well cared for. Pupils told me that they like school a lot and enjoy learning. They are happy, polite, confident and enthusiastic. They appreciate the work that teachers and other adults do to help them learn. They have no concerns about bullying and are confident that any issues they have will be sorted out by their teachers.

Governors are strongly committed to and highly supportive of the school. They have a thorough understanding of its strengths and areas for development. This is because they visit regularly and make incisive use of the information provided to them to analyse school performance.

Safeguarding is effective.

The well-being of pupils is at the heart of this caring school and there is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff receive regular training in all aspects of safeguarding and are updated regularly. Consequently, they know what signs to look for that may indicate that a pupil is at risk. All staff understand and follow the clear procedures for recording concerns. All required checks are made when new staff are appointed.

Pupils feel safe and reported that bullying is very rare. Pupils said that they are confident that adults would sort things out if they did have any concerns. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about how to keep safe in a variety of situations. Pupils told me how they should stay safe when working online and when crossing the road. Parents who responded to Parent View were very confident that their children are happy and safe in school.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry, to check whether the school remains good, was around attendance. This was because, in 2016, both absence and persistent absence were higher than average for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. In addition, in 2017, persistent absence for this group was high. We discussed individual pupils and you explained that, in both years, there are a few pupils in this group who have specific medical needs which cause

unavoidable absence due to illness and the need to attend hospital appointments.

- I scrutinised procedures for monitoring absence. These are rigorous. All absence is followed up assiduously. The school works closely with parents to support them in ensuring that their children attend school regularly. The importance of good attendance is strongly promoted, and most current pupils attend regularly, encouraged by their enjoyment of all aspects of school life.
- The next line of enquiry I pursued was to look at the early years. The proportion of children achieving the expected good level of development by the end of Reception dipped in 2017 to below average. This proportion has fluctuated over the last three years. I wanted to check how well current children are doing.
- We discussed that, as there are only 15 children in each cohort, overall percentages can be overly influenced by the performance of one or two children. We also discussed that, in 2015, almost half the cohort was born in the summer and so these children were still quite young at the end of the early years. These children went on to make good progress from the end of the early years to the end of key stage 1. Published data for 2017 at key stage 1, confirms that a much higher proportion met and exceeded national expectations for attainment in reading, writing and mathematics than at the end of the early years.
- Together, we observed teaching and learning in the early years class. School tracking information about children's progress and attainment, the written work in children's books and the learning journeys, in which staff record how well children are doing, all show that most children are making good progress from their starting points at the start of the Reception Year. You have rightly identified that increasing the proportion of children meeting and exceeding age-related expectations at the end of the early years is a continuing development priority.
- My third line of enquiry was to ascertain whether there is evidence that the standards achieved at the end of both key stages are likely to be sustained. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 has been above average for the past two years. Their progress between Year 2 and Year 6 has also been above average. Strong achievement ensures that they are well prepared for secondary school.
- The work in pupils' books and school internal tracking information indicate that these standards are likely to be maintained in 2018. All groups of pupils continue to make rapid and sustained progress from the end of the early years to the end of Year 6. Teachers double-check their judgements about pupils' achievement with other schools and the local authority to ensure that they are accurate. You have identified that, in order to ensure that pupils' attainment and progress in writing improve still further, teachers need to increase opportunities for pupils to produce longer pieces of writing in all areas of the curriculum. This is identified in your development plan.
- My final focus was to check how effectively the school has addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. All the evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and that all pupils, including the most able, make exceptional progress during their time in school. Published data and the official recognition

that the school has received from the Department of Education also verify this. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Planning for school improvement is accurate and challenging. It clearly sets out what needs to be done, how this will be achieved and how success will be measured. Your accurate self-evaluation has underpinned improvements to date and evidences good capacity for sustained improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they implement plans to provide even better opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces of work across all areas of the curriculum
- all teachers insist that pupils' presentation, when they are writing in subjects other than English, is as good as it is in English
- a higher proportion of children achieve a good level of development and some exceed the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year.

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

Yours sincerely

Joan Beale
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held discussions with you about the key lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's self-evaluation, plans for future improvement and information about current pupils' progress and attainment. Meetings were held with subject and senior leaders and three governors. Additionally, I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.

We visited all classrooms together to observe teaching, learning and assessment, and looked at the work in pupils' books in a range of subjects.

I met with a group of pupils to talk about their experiences at school and talked more informally with pupils in lessons and at breaktime. I scrutinised safeguarding policies and practice, including systems for safe recruitment of staff. The views of 62 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account as well as 60 responses using the free-text service. I also considered the views of the parents I spoke with during the inspection and those who had responded to the school's own questionnaire.