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Dear Mr Taylor

Short Inspection of Robin Hood Academy

Following my visit to the school with Michael Appleby, Ofsted Inspector, on 1 November 2016, 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 since the predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted in July 2013, when it was judged to be good overall.

This school continues to be good.

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

Robin Hood Academy is a highly exciting place to learn, grow and develop. You and the other senior leaders are highly ambitious leaders, with a clear vision for the school. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school as a result of the vibrant curriculum taught by enthusiastic staff, and they receive an education which is at least good. The ethos and vision of leaders is keenly supported by the staff, governing body and the executive board of the newly created multi-academy trust. Staff, pupils, parents and governors work together effectively to develop and improve the educational experiences the pupils receive. For example, inspectors and all staff agree that leaders have created a climate in which teachers are trusted to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for the pupils.

At the previous inspection of the predecessor school, it was recommended that teaching should be improved by sharing the best practice in the school, developing the use of questioning and improving writing across the curriculum. Leaders and teachers have successfully addressed all of these areas, which have now become strengths of the educational provision. Other recent initiatives introduced, such as joined handwriting and a new mathematics curriculum, need more time to become fully embedded. In addition, leaders know that further work is needed to improve the effectiveness of recent changes to the school's marking and feedback policy. Pupils' attendance has also improved since the previous inspection to be in line with the national average. However, the attendance

of disadvantaged pupils is not monitored closely enough by leaders and has not improved.

The large majority of parents are very supportive of the care, support and stimulating education their children receive. Some parents are still adjusting to recent changes such as the creation of the multi-academy trust and the new mathematics curriculum. However, most parents still made a variety of positive comments and clearly appreciate the opportunities to come into school each morning and develop their own skills through weekly workshops. A typical comment was, 'Our children always come out so positive and enthusiastic and love getting involved in after school activity groups, like Chinese choir and multi-sports group, which they respond really well to.'

Staff are proud to be part of the school and are very supportive of the leaders. The staff that completed the inspection survey agree that pupils are safe at the school and that their behaviour is good. Training and professional development is a strong feature of this school, with a range of development opportunities for staff at all levels. This training is used well to support improvement and ensure that the school challenges all pupils to make at least good progress. Leaders have made a number of changes to move the school forward. They are also aware, however, that some developments are still needed and improvements, such as the new mathematics curriculum, need more time to become fully effective. There are some innovative aspects of the education provided at Robin Hood Academy, such as the inclusive, global, experience-rich curriculum, which all pupils have equal access to. Pupils are rightly proud of their school and enjoy the exciting range of lessons, extra-curricular activities and opportunities which the staff organise.

Safeguarding is effective

Safeguarding arrangements are robust. Leaders ensure that all new staff are inducted carefully and that all adults in the school are kept up to date with training, including the prevention of extremism in education. Leaders also ensure that the curriculum includes regular opportunities for pupils to learn about how to keep safe. For example, an external theatre group has been used to successfully teach pupils about how to use the internet safely. The school has also used organisations such as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) to help safeguard pupils against child sexual exploitation. Careful record-keeping and very good relationships with parents and external agencies have resulted in a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school.

Pupils' personal development and welfare is a strength of the school. The school's approach is to encourage the development of pupils' independent skills from an early age. As a result, their personal, social and emotional skills are well developed. Pupils eagerly enjoy school and say that there are few problems at playtimes because they get on well. Pupils say that they feel safe because the staff know and care for them well and resolve any issues that arise. Staff manage behaviour well through the strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum. They teach pupils about having high aspirations and the importance of respect for all others.

Inspection findings

- Since your appointment in January 2016, you have created a highly ambitious culture of

teaching and learning, firmly supported by a stimulating curriculum. Senior leaders lead a successful 'coaching' model for teachers, which has helped to further develop the quality of teaching. Teachers, including those who are newly qualified, are very enthusiastic and appreciate the support they are given to improve their practice. The convincing aim of leaders is to create a 'flagship' school, at the cutting edge of teaching, technology and educational thinking.

- The governing body is effective and equally ambitious. Governors have successfully overseen the recent formation of the Robin Hood Multi-Academy Trust. Governors and the multi-academy trust executive board have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and work alongside each other well to ensure that the work of Robin Hood Academy continues to improve. Governors have overseen improvements such as the appointment of you and other senior leaders, high-quality professional development for staff to support changes to the national curriculum, and improved key stage 2 outcomes. Governors visit the school regularly and minutes of meetings show that they both support and hold leaders to account for the actions they take.
- Pupils' outcomes by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6 have improved this year and are above the national average. Pupils' progress in key stage 2 is likely to be significantly above the national average in writing and mathematics when the results are validated. Pupils' progress in reading was also above the national average, but the most able disadvantaged pupils did not make as much progress in reading as other pupils in the school and those nationally. Typically, the most able pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics from Year 2 to Year 6. Outcomes are also successful for Year 2 pupils and typically above the national average. Some pupil groups, such as those who achieved well at the end of the Reception Year, did not make as much progress in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 as similar pupils nationally.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics in Year 1 is just above the national average. In 2016, the difference between the Year 1 phonics attainment of disadvantaged pupils (those who qualify for the pupil premium funding) and other pupils in school diminished significantly. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school is higher than the national average. From Year 2 to Year 6, this group typically achieve at least in line with other pupils in the school and, therefore, often above other pupils nationally. The ethos of the school is an inclusive one and pupils are given an equal opportunity to succeed. However, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not always progress or attain as well as other pupils in the school. Leaders are aware of this and already have plans in place to improve the provision and outcomes for this group of pupils.
- Parents are very supportive of the school's work and especially appreciate the opportunity to see their child learning at the beginning of every morning in key stage 1. Leaders and staff promote this strategy to help parents know what their child is learning and where they have improvements to make. In addition, leaders organise weekly workshops for parents, for example to help them understand their child's education and improve their ability to support homework. These workshops are well attended and warmly appreciated by parents.
- In the early years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception improved in 2015 and stayed at the same level in 2016. This is slightly below the national average. Inspection evidence shows that the early years provision is not as focused and successful as the rest of the school. Some children start school with lower skills than those typical for their age, especially in speech, language and communication. Teachers and teaching assistants help children to improve their

skills in Nursery and Reception, but not enough children make enough progress to catch up by the time they start Year 1.

- The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's surveys during this inspection were very supportive of the school, highlighting the positive and welcoming culture of the school and the broad curriculum. A minority of parents had concerns about homework arrangements and some of the recent changes to the school and the impact this had on staffing changes. Leaders are aware that further time and work is needed to ensure changes are embedded and parents' concerns are addressed.
- Robin Hood Academy is an exciting place to learn, with engaging learning environments and fascinating 'growth mindset' displays to interest and inspire young children and pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- there is sharper focus on improving the effectiveness of early years, to enable these children to make as much progress as pupils in the rest of the school
- recent initiatives, such as the school's new mathematics curriculum, are further developed and embedded into teaching
- closer monitoring and support is put in place to ensure that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils continues to increase so that it is closer to or equal to that of other pupils in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Stuart Bellworthy
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, senior leaders, a group of governors and the chair of the executive board. The key lines of enquiry were: pupils' progress in key stage 1; the progress of disadvantaged pupils; attendance; and the impact of leaders and managers since the previous inspection. Teaching and learning was observed in a sample of classes across the school with senior leaders. Work in pupils' books was checked to establish the progress and quality of pupils' work over time. Informal discussions were held with pupils and parents to gauge their views on the school. Forty-seven responses to the Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered, along with 40 free-text comments from parents. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes were observed around the school and at lunchtime. A wide range of documentation was also scrutinised, including the school's plans for improvement, external monitoring reports, records relating to attendance, safeguarding, records of checks made by leaders and the most recent outcomes.