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27 September 2018

Mrs Deborah Mills
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Mills

Short inspection of Hadnall CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 September 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 April 2014.

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.**

Since the time of the last inspection, the school has experienced some significant changes in staffing, including your appointment to the school as headteacher in April 2015. Despite your efforts to lessen the impact on the continuity in pupils' learning and progress, this staffing upheaval has contributed to some variation in the quality of teaching. This historic turbulence in staffing has resulted in fluctuations in pupils' outcomes over recent years, particularly in mathematics, reading and phonics. Encouragingly, staffing has now stabilised, which places you in a stronger position to drive forward the school's plans for improvement.

You have identified accurately which aspects of the school's work need improving and put in place appropriate plans to address issues with teaching, learning and assessment. You are well supported by enthusiastic subject leaders who take responsibility for standards in their subject areas across the school. However, they recognise that there is still more work to do to ensure that teaching is appropriately challenging to meet the needs of all pupils, including the most able pupils.

There is a close-knit staff team, where everyone is keen to play their part in supporting pupils. Pupils speak positively about their teachers, their learning experiences, and the good friendships that they make in school. Pupils are hard-

working, listen attentively to their teachers and behave well. The capacity of most pupils, including some of the youngest, to settle down quickly and work independently is impressive. This is because teachers have instilled in pupils the importance of good organisational skills and how to use time wisely for learning. The atmosphere in school is calming and friendly, which supports an environment conducive to learning.

Pupils value the diverse curriculum the school offers and enjoy the opportunities they have to share their learning with parents and carers. For example, following a visit to a museum, pupils displayed and talked about their work related to Egyptian artefacts. Parents, too, speak favourably about the school's efforts to engage them in their children's learning. Parents also commented on improved methods of communication between home and school and clearer expectations about homework. A few parents shared concerns about staffing changes in recent years. Almost all parents were in common agreement that their children were happy at school and felt safe.

Governors are committed to the school and generally support you effectively in your work. They have a broad overview of the school's performance because they visit the school regularly and are provided with relevant information by leaders. Governors use their knowledge of the school to ask challenging questions. However, sometimes they do not pursue these questions fully to get to the crux of the matter about pupils' achievement. This means that emerging improvement priorities are not always addressed swiftly enough. For example, the decline in phonics outcomes had not been sufficiently challenged by governors to ascertain why results were not as successful as in the past.

At the time of the last inspection, leaders were tasked with improving pupils' rates of progress in mathematics. While it is acknowledged that you did implement a range of initiatives to improve the teaching of mathematics, the impact was not consistently effective across all classes or year groups. Subsequently, there are still too many pupils that do not make the progress in mathematics of which they are capable. You have identified some weaknesses in the assessment of mathematics, notably related to the accuracy of teachers' judgements. You have already started to tackle this issue with the help of the recently appointed subject leader for mathematics.

You know the school well and have a realistic understanding of the challenges ahead. You have a team of staff that are committed to bringing about the necessary changes to improve outcomes for pupils. You have already turned a corner and embarked on this journey of improvement. The plan you have set out, if implemented effectively, monitored carefully and adapted when necessary, should serve you well in addressing your school improvement priorities. You draw on external support when needed and this has helped to improve the quality of teaching.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for

purpose. Staff are alert to any indicators that a pupil may have suffered from harm. When they do have any concerns, staff take prompt action in the best interests of the pupil to provide them with the right help. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge about safeguarding matters because they receive regular updates from leaders. You commission external partners to periodically review the school's safeguarding procedures to reassure yourself that processes are robust. You act on any recommendations from the findings of such reviews without delay to help improve systems. Safeguarding records are kept secure and are appropriately detailed, recording the concerns, discussions and decisions made. However, occasionally, staff do not record with enough clarity the reasons for their decisions.

You have ensured that appropriate opportunities to teach pupils about how to keep safe, both in school and beyond, are built into the curriculum. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding about different aspects of keeping safe. They speak confidently about road safety, protecting their privacy online, and who they would share their concerns with if one of their friends was being hurt. School staff are nurturing and help pupils to feel safe and valued. This contributes well to pupils' self-esteem and positive mental health.

Inspection findings

- Pupils' outcomes in mathematics, notably in key stage 2, are not improving quickly enough. Over the last few years, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been variable, ranging from high to low in comparison to national averages. In 2018, attainment was particularly low, with only a third of pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics at the end of key stage 2. This means that two-thirds of pupils were not prepared adequately for the demands of the key stage 3 mathematics curriculum.
- Attainment in mathematics at the end of key stage 1 has risen steadily over time. Teachers have rightly invested time in securing pupils' understanding of place value and developing their fluency in mathematics. However, there is sometimes a lack of challenge in learning for the most able pupils, which hampers their progress and limits their chances of achieving at greater depth.
- Immediately following the disappointing 2018 key stage 2 mathematics national test results, you took action to pinpoint, and start to address, weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics. You sought and quickly acted upon external advice and support from a mathematics consultant. Teachers have responded well to the renewed approach to teaching mathematics, although it is still too early to determine the impact of this work on pupils' progress over time. You recognise that there needs to be greater emphasis on teachers providing the most able pupils with work which gets them to think more deeply.
- Despite some pupils attaining very well at the end of key stage 1, for the last three consecutive years, no key stage 2 pupils have attained the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined. Teachers routinely set work for pupils in lessons at various levels of difficulty. However, the work for some pupils, and often the most able pupils, does not stretch them enough. Recently, you have stressed the importance of teachers being very clear about

pupils' starting points when planning learning. This is helping teachers to match work more carefully to pupils' needs and support their progress.

- Teachers work hard to develop pupils' interest in books and encourage them to read. This is proving effective because pupils enjoy reading and talk confidently about what they have read. Leaders have established a clear expectation that pupils read regularly at home, and many do. In addition, 'reading buddies', where older pupils read with younger pupils, enables the sharing of good books and promotes reading well. While the school does not have a specific strategy for supporting the needs of the most able readers, the approach to teaching comprehension skills is providing some level of appropriate challenge.
- Key stage 1 pupils' achievement in phonics is too variable, and some pupils struggle to apply their phonics knowledge well to read unknown words. This is because the teaching of phonics is not consistently strong because not all staff possess the right skills and knowledge to teach phonics effectively. For example, staff do not always model sounds correctly. This hampers pupils' ability to learn how to blend sounds successfully and read words accurately.
- Teachers adopt an appropriate sequence of learning in phonics. However, younger pupils are not provided with sufficient time to apply their learning from phonic sessions and build fluency in reading. Teachers rarely provide reading books to pupils that are phonetically decodable and matched well to their recent phonics learning. This is holding back pupils' progress in their early reading development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- strategies to raise attainment in mathematics, particularly at key stage 2, are embedded, and their impact closely monitored by leaders and governors
- teachers provide the most able pupils with work that challenges them and enables them to achieve the higher standards of which they are capable
- weaknesses in the teaching of phonics are quickly addressed by providing appropriate training for staff so they are able to teach phonics well
- teachers provide pupils with more opportunities to practise their phonic skills, using appropriate texts carefully matched to their phonic knowledge
- in the case of safeguarding documentation, staff record clearly the reasons for the decisions made.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Hill
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held a discussion with you about the school's self-evaluation, development plan and current priorities. I spoke to two subject leaders to find out about their plans for improvement. I met with you to discuss the school's arrangements for child protection and safeguarding. I held a meeting with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also met with the local authority school improvement adviser. I talked to several staff about how they keep pupils safe. I observed learning with you in all classes. I talked to pupils about their work and looked at a range of books, mainly related to English and mathematics. I listened to several pupils read and talked with others about their reading habits. There were no results from the pupil survey.

I evaluated a wide variety of documents, including the school's development plan, subject action plans, pupils' assessment information, governors' documentation and records related to safeguarding. The views of parents were considered through the 20 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire and 15 free-text comments. I spoke to parents on the playground at the start of the school day. There were no results from the staff survey.