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22 January 2019

Mr Andrew Payne
Headteacher
Hanbury CofE First School
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Dear Mr Payne

Short inspection of Hanbury CofE First School

Following my visit to the school on 9 January 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

You have developed a close-knit and cohesive team of staff who share your commitment, drive and passion to ensure that the pupils at Hanbury CofE Primary have a positive and well-rounded education. Through some very challenging times over the last two years, you have provided your staff with exceptional support to ensure that the quality of the pupils' education has not been compromised.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite and confident and their enthusiasm for learning shines out. Pupils' respect for one another and for all adults is remarkable and pupils say, 'We look after everyone.' They understand and follow the school rules and routines, and rarely do they need to be reminded what to do. The school's Christian values of respect, endurance, trust, forgiveness, kindness and friendship are embedded across the school and pupils reflect carefully on them through the 'Hanbury Hand'. Pupils show a strong acceptance and tolerance of people with different faiths and beliefs and consider different faiths through the well-taught religious education curriculum.

Parents and carers are highly supportive of you and your staff. They value greatly the nurturing ethos of the school, particularly the care and consideration that staff show towards their children, and say, 'The school is like a family.' Parents also appreciate the wider opportunities that you and your staff provide for pupils, such

as the opportunities to learn using the outdoor environment, visits to Hanbury Hall and the wide range of extra-curricular activities their children can attend after school. One comment summarised the views expressed by many parents:

'Most importantly I feel that Hanbury School, in addition to providing intellectual and physical development, is teaching the importance of Christian values and kindness and is teaching my child to be responsible.'

You have a precise understanding of the school's strengths, but also where further improvements could be made to enhance the quality of education even more. You regularly review whether your school development actions are improving pupils' outcomes. In response to the reviews, including reviews carried out with the Bromsgrove Learning Partnership, you refine and develop your action plans to ensure that the school continues to improve.

Since the last inspection, you and your leaders have successfully improved pupils' understanding of shape in mathematics. You have also taken effective steps to improve pupils' outcomes in writing, especially those of boys. When planning the English curriculum, teachers ensure that their plans not only meet the learning needs of the pupils, but also their interests. The English topics now successfully engage all pupils in writing, and pupils demonstrate an eagerness to write about subjects such as castles and dragons. Teachers give pupils opportunities to discuss what they are going to write about to improve the breadth of vocabulary they use in their writing. Pupils have opportunities to write in a range of different styles and in different subjects. You and your leaders have also introduced an effective handwriting and spelling programme which has helped to increase the accuracy and fluency of pupils' writing. These actions have led to improved outcomes for the majority of pupils, especially boys and pupils with additional needs and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

However, support for the most able pupils is not as strong as for other pupils in writing. On occasion, teachers do not provide the most able pupils with activities to allow them to show what they are truly capable of. While the most able pupils are making progress, the lack of challenge and opportunities to express themselves in more sustained pieces of writing does not enable them to make as much progress as they could.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You undertake all relevant checks on current staff and those newly appointed to work in the school. All staff are highly vigilant and report any concerns they may have about a pupil to you quickly. You record all concerns and respond to them swiftly, ensuring that additional support and guidance are sought from external agencies where necessary. You go to great lengths to make sure that pupils have the help and support they need to keep them as safe as possible. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and that there is always someone in school that they can talk to if they are worried about something.

Your curriculum plans include a range of ways to teach pupils how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. For example, pupils learn how to cross the road safely and about water safety. In addition to this, initiatives such as 'stranger danger' further develops pupils' understanding of personal safety. You and your staff also provide pupils with opportunities to manage risks themselves and learn how to evaluate what is safe and not safe. For example, in outdoor learning sessions, staff help pupils to decide how high they can safely climb a tree and what to do if they encounter a dog in a field. E-safety is particularly well taught, and pupils show a strong understanding of how to use the internet and social media safely. You also teach parents about the importance of e-safety and how to make sure that their children are not exposing themselves to risk when using computers at home.

Inspection findings

- The governors are a key strength of the school and work closely with you to ensure that the school continues to improve. They are committed to the school and carry out their roles in a highly professional manner. Governors constantly seek ways to improve, including sharing expertise with other governors from across the Bromsgrove Learning Partnership. This highly effective governance is supporting school improvement well.
- Your detailed review of the whole curriculum led to you and your leaders developing a new approach to curriculum planning. New topics were introduced which are closely matched to pupils' interests. Teachers' enthusiasm for teaching a wide range of subjects has increased, as has their confidence in using a variety of teaching methods. This, in turn, has led to higher levels of pupils' engagement and excitement in their learning. Teachers carefully adapt the topics from one year to the next to ensure that they continue to meet the interests of each unique cohort of pupils.
- Subject leaders now take a higher level of responsibility for developing their subject area more creatively. This has been particularly successful in art. Pupils' work in their art books shows their artistic skills being very well developed from one year to the next. Pupils also apply these skills using different media.
- However, further curriculum developments are required to ensure that pupils make strong progress in all subjects, especially history and geography. While subject leaders have developed the teaching of their subjects well in their own classes, they do not yet have a clear enough overview of how well pupils' knowledge and skills are being developed in other year groups. Leaders have not mapped out the development of subject knowledge and skills well enough to ensure that teachers take into consideration what pupils have learned before when planning in their classes. This limits pupils' progress in some subjects.
- The support that you and your staff provide for pupils with a variety of additional needs, including pupils with SEND, is a notable strength of the school. You and your leaders ensure that parents are fully involved with the support that their children receive. When specialist advice and support are needed, you and your leaders provide them quickly to ensure that all pupils are fully and successfully engaged with all aspects of school life. There is a highly inclusive ethos across

the school.

- In addition to this, teachers make sure that they take into account all aspects of a pupil's needs when planning for them. Teachers strive to ensure that any barriers to learning are identified and broken down. As a result, pupils with SEND and additional needs make strong progress from their starting points.
- Rightly, you hold your teaching assistants in high regard and describe them as 'the cement in the school'. This is fully justified. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, and their effective support is contributing to the strong progress pupils make, especially in reading and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers challenge the most able pupils in writing to enable them to make stronger progress
- subject leaders are supported to develop clear curriculum plans which develop pupils' knowledge and skills progressively in all subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Ann Pritchard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the deputy headteacher and a group of governors. I held a telephone conversation with a headteacher from the Bromsgrove Learning Partnership. I talked to pupils about their learning, visited lessons across key stages 1 and 2 with you and the deputy headteacher, and looked at examples of pupils' work. I observed pupils' behaviour before school, during breaktime and at lunchtime. I spoke to parents and to pupils informally throughout the day. I also met formally with a group of pupils. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's own evaluation of its performance, the school development plan, documents relating to keeping pupils safe, and the most recent information about pupils' achievement. I considered the 39 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire and the 31 free-text comments from parents. There were no responses to the staff or pupil questionnaires.