

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



17 July 2019

Mr Paul Hankey  
John Hampden Primary School  
Park Street  
Thame  
Oxfordshire  
OX9 3HU

Dear Mr Paul Hankey

### **Short inspection of John Hampden Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 2 July 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 April 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

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

Along with staff and governors, you have ensured that the school provides a warm and welcoming learning environment. The vision of 'aspiration and opportunity' is embedded alongside the three core aims of 'we do our best, we are kind and we are a team'. Positive relationships between staff, families and pupils underpin the work of the school. Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school and say that 'the school feels like a family' and 'there is a real sense of community'.

Your effective leadership has ensured that the school has continued to improve outcomes for all pupils. Precise action planning and feedback from external partners have supported the rapid improvement that has been made since you became headteacher in January 2016. Your recent work to improve the rates of progress of disadvantaged pupils has raised performance, with a higher proportion than previously achieving age-related expectations and above.

Outcomes for pupils have been above those seen nationally for several years. More recently, the outcomes for those working at greater depth at the end of key stage 2 have risen and are now significantly above national figures, particularly in reading and mathematics. Pupils make strong progress across the school. The proportion of

children who reach a good level of development at the end of the early years is typically above the national average over time. Pupils sustain this strong progress in key stage 1 and key stage 2. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education as attainment is above average and progress is strong.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. They listen carefully to staff and to each other, enabling them to learn well. In lessons, pupils work well together, cooperating and supporting each other when needed. Similarly, at playtime, pupils are kind, friendly and warm towards each other. They are welcoming and inclusive to everyone in the school community.

Pupils love learning because teachers make learning interesting and fun. Teachers plan sequences of learning effectively, particularly in English, mathematics, art and music. This is because of strong subject knowledge and high expectations of what pupils can achieve. At the last inspection, senior leaders were asked to provide pupils, particularly the most able, with more challenge to ensure that they are fully engaged in their learning. Teachers ensure that there is always something to challenge the most able pupils in these subjects. However, there are fewer opportunities to challenge the most able pupils in other subjects such as science, geography and history. There is a consistent approach to teaching and learning across the school. All staff, including teaching assistants, expect pupils to work hard and produce their best work. Pupils' written work is of a very high standard because pupils know that teachers will only accept their best efforts. This is true in all subjects across the curriculum. Senior leaders have high expectations of staff and reflect this in the feedback and advice that they provide. They celebrate the positive aspects of learning that they have seen and also offer effective guidance on areas for staff to work on to sharpen their practice.

Governors are committed to the school. They are knowledgeable and understand the improvement priorities. Governors regularly visit in order to monitor leaders' actions to check that school improvement priorities are on track to be achieved. They ensure that statutory duties are met, for example by regularly monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures. They challenge and offer support when required.

You were also asked, at the last inspection, to ensure that pupils were more involved in whole-class discussions. Senior leaders sought good practice in this area in other schools. As a result, cooperative learning and discussion strategies were introduced. These strategies are used effectively across the school to ensure that all pupils are involved in group discussions which feed into whole-class discussions. Another development point was to develop the skills of middle leaders further, so that they are able to contribute effectively to school improvement. The middle leaders of English and mathematics have received training and support from external consultants and now play an active role in improving teaching and learning across the school.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and meet requirements. Records are detailed and kept securely. Leaders and governors place high importance on safeguarding. Pupils trust staff to look after them and know that there is always someone to go to with any concerns. Staff have regular training and updates so that they recognise when a pupil may be at risk. Staff report and record concerns promptly. The designated safeguarding leaders work with external agencies effectively and are proactive in following up actions and concerns.

Pupils learn how to stay safe in a range of situations. For example, pupils recently took part in an e-safety week. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online. Pupils also attended an assembly led by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, called 'Speak out, stay safe'. Pupils with whom I spoke said that bullying was rare and that when it did happen it was resolved quickly. Pupils describe the school as a 'happy place'. Parents who responded to the online survey overwhelmingly agreed that their children feel safe and are well cared for in school.

Leaders identified that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils needed to improve and that persistent absence for this group needed to reduce. Leaders have introduced effective procedures to follow up on absences quickly. The special educational needs coordinator and home-school link worker have worked with parents effectively in order to understand the reasons why pupils are missing school and have supported them when needed. Attendance figures for disadvantaged pupils have risen and persistent absence has decreased significantly this year.

## **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, we explored three lines of enquiry. The first of these focused on how leaders have improved teaching since the last inspection so that all pupils are challenged. The consistency of the quality of teaching is strong across the school. Teachers' good subject knowledge ensures that pupils are challenged in lessons. Teachers expect pupils to produce work of high quality and pupils are encouraged to make improvements to their work through editing before it is shown to the teacher. Strategies to engage all pupils in class discussion are embedded across the school. As a result, pupils articulate their learning clearly and understand what they need to do to improve their work. However, evidence in pupils' books showed that challenge for the most able in science, geography and history was not as strong.
- The second line of enquiry focused on the progress that disadvantaged pupils make in writing. At the end of key stage 2, in 2018, the progress that disadvantaged pupils made in writing was below national figures. Leaders have taken effective action to address this decline. Support from an external adviser has raised the profile of disadvantaged pupils across the school. Teachers now have a greater understanding than previously of the barriers to learning that

some pupils face. They have adapted their teaching and support to meet pupils' learning needs more effectively. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' performance in writing across the school has improved. In the early years, provisional 2019 results indicate that the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving a good level of development has increased significantly. Provisional 2019 results at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 also indicate that the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving both the expected standard and the greater depth standard in writing has improved.

- Disadvantaged pupils' writing in English and across the curriculum is presented well and is of a good quality as a result of their effective editing and the precise feedback given to them about how to improve their work. Disadvantaged pupils participate actively in lessons and contribute their ideas confidently during class discussions. Evidence in books shows that disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress in writing across the school.
- The third focus for this inspection looked at the effectiveness of leaders in providing a broad and balanced curriculum. The curriculum is a significant strength of the school. The design and implementation of the curriculum ensures that pupils build a depth of learning in a range of subjects and make strong progress.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of learning experiences. These are enhanced through the use of regular visits and special events. For example, the recent 'Viking day' enabled the Year 4 pupils to gain a greater understanding of invasion. These opportunities help to bring subjects to life for pupils and further fuel their enthusiasm for learning. The many clubs also play a valuable role in enabling pupils to learn outside of school hours.
- Provision for both art and music is very strong across the school. Pupils produce high-quality artwork which highlights the skills that they have been taught. The quality of pupils' sculpture across the school is also strong as they are challenged to produce work of high quality. All pupils have the opportunity to learn to play an instrument. Music is taught effectively by a subject specialist. The school has close links with the Oxfordshire music hub, which provides individual music lessons for pupils.
- Personal, social, health and emotional education and values education are at the heart of the schools' curriculum. This provision enables pupils to think critically about global issues such as apartheid and pollution. British values are threaded through the curriculum effectively, for example through the class charters.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Staff provide more challenge for the most able pupils in science, geography and history.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Oxfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mo Galway  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, other leaders, pupils and members of the governing body. I also spoke to a representative of the local authority. We visited all classes together to observe teaching and learning. I scrutinised a wide range of pupils' work alongside your subject leaders. I took account of 37 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire, 84 responses to the pupils' survey and 135 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including 131 free-text comments. I also spoke to a number of parents at the beginning of the school day.

I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and as they moved around the school. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including: information about pupils' achievement; attendance information; the school development plan; and a range of the school's policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding. We also discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness.