

14 December 2018

Mrs Julia Battersby
Headteacher
Hayesdown First School
Wyville Road
Frome
Somerset
BA11 2BN

Dear Mrs Battersby

Short inspection of Hayesdown First School

Following my visit to the school on 5 December 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There have been significant changes in leadership since the previous inspection. You have very recently taken up your role as headteacher. You are already working effectively with the newly returned deputy headteacher, who has been supporting leadership in another trust school. In a short time, you have gained the confidence of staff and, together, you have revisited the school's vision and values. You are bringing increased clarity to the school's self-evaluation and development planning. You and your experienced team of leaders are continuing to develop teaching through well-planned professional development.

Parents and carers have been reassured by the smooth handover of leadership and encouraged by the continuing drive for improvement. A parent expressed confidence in your leadership, as shared by others, when saying, 'The overall vision for the school is clear and forward thinking.' Pupils are keen and attentive learners. They value and take full advantage of the broad curricular opportunities planned for them, such as the mathematics café and the sporting opportunities at lunchtimes.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were required to increase the challenge in lessons for the most able pupils. This has been planned for effectively through new learning programmes and additional professional development for teachers. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics was above the 2018 national average. Leaders were also asked to increase pupils' achievement in writing. The teaching of writing has been improved and standards have risen

overall. However, the inspection showed that there is still more to do to secure the achievement of all pupils.

You have worked with leaders to strengthen the information the school holds about individual pupils' progress. This information is used well to guide plans for further improvements to achievement. However, leaders and governors have not fully evaluated the impact of last year's additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Currently, leaders are not clarifying and, as necessary, adapting these plans quickly enough to secure disadvantaged pupils' progress, particularly in writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

As leaders and governors, you place safeguarding at the heart of the school's work and have ensured that policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Three senior leaders are trained to lead on safeguarding. Their teamwork is supporting a vigilant culture where all concerns that pupils may be at risk are regularly discussed and swiftly acted upon. Staff have received high-quality training through the school's own training programme and use reporting systems effectively.

Safe recruitment of staff is supported through the Bath and Mendip Partnership Trust's procedures and all records of checks are managed efficiently by the school. Governors support leaders well with auditing the school's procedures and regularly check and report on the effectiveness of the school's systems for safeguarding.

Pupils feel safe in school and say that other pupils behave well and are friendly. They say that the Golden Rules, displayed inside and outside the building, remind them of the school's expectations. Pupils are courteous and the school is calm. Improved pastoral support for the small number of pupils with challenging behaviour has meant that exclusion has not been needed for some considerable time. Parents spoken to and those who responded to Parent View wholeheartedly agree that their children feel safe in school.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I reviewed the school's approach to developing pupils' writing, particularly for boys and children in the Reception class. The proportion of children in the early years attaining the early learning goal in writing does not meet the national average. I also reviewed the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils, including for securing their attendance. My final line of enquiry was to look at the progress pupils are making across key stage 2.
- There have been improvements in attainment in writing at the end of key stage 1 this year. However, boys' achievement in writing has not always matched their achievement in other subjects. Leaders have put in place extensive guidance on how to develop pupils' writing. Teachers in key stages 1 and 2 consistently use the guidance effectively. Pupils in Year 1 quickly develop stamina for writing and write for a range of purposes. Across the school, pupils go on to develop skills of reviewing and improving their work. The most able pupils are deepening the effectiveness of their writing. For example, in Year 3, pupils retold the story of

Romulus and Remus. In their edited and improved versions, the most able pupils wrote in paragraphs and used vocabulary fitted to the story style. Pupils are proud of their writing. Final fair copies are displayed in class books and shared with others across the school.

- Pupils' books show that underdeveloped handwriting is a barrier that prevents some boys gaining fluency in writing. By Year 4, however, most write cursively and legibly. In the Reception class, boys are guided to form the patterns needed to write letters accurately. In some cases, boys' writing books from the Reception classes show that they are slow to form letters accurately, even when they have begun school with at least the early writing skills typically found for their age. When seen choosing their learning activity, few boys chose to practise their writing or apply their new skills. At times, the learning opportunities, materials and activities do not stimulate or link to their interests.
- There are an increasing number of disadvantaged pupils in the school. The needs of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are met well. When specialist support is needed, it is overseen and monitored rigorously. Equally, some disadvantaged pupils have abilities greater than those usually found for their age. The increased challenge, which is part of all lessons, is supporting them in deepening their learning in mathematics and writing. Disadvantaged pupils are generally supported well in class by skilled teaching assistants. However, the overall proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching the standard expected for their age in writing remains low. Their workbooks show that many still lack the basic skills of grammar and spelling needed to meet the standard expected for their age. The lack of a current plan for how disadvantaged pupils' writing is developed means that, for some pupils, these difficulties are not being overcome quickly.
- Leaders recognise that the low levels of attendance for a small group of disadvantaged pupils have been a barrier to their achievement. Leaders use external advice effectively to overcome persistent absence. Families are challenged and supported to improve their children's attendance. This is having a positive impact and the persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils is reducing.
- As a first school, pupils transfer to the next stage of their education at the end of Year 4. School records and pupils' work show that pupils in the current key stage 2 have made good progress from their starting points at the end of key stage 1, particularly in reading and mathematics. In well-planned reading lessons, teachers are systematically developing pupils' skills of comprehension. In mathematics lessons and in books, pupils show skills of arithmetic and problem solving at least at the levels expected for their age. Their ability to explain their mathematical thinking is developed well through challenging tasks.
- Teachers in key stage 2 develop pupils' knowledge across the curriculum. For example, Year 4 pupils have explored the overuse of plastic and its negative impact on the environment. Pupils are stimulated to think critically and were seen debating the use of plastic carrier bags, developing arguments for and against. This work develops pupils' moral, social and cultural skills and deepens the quality of their writing. For example, pupils' persuasive letters to businesses which they believe could reduce their use of plastic showed their ability to

organise and express their ideas succinctly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is evaluated promptly, and is securely planned and used effectively to improve their progress
- an increased proportion of disadvantaged pupils attain at or above the expected level for their age in writing
- teachers in the early years enhance opportunities for children to develop and apply their writing skills so that more reach the expected standard for their age.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Marriott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with you and other leaders. We made visits to classes to observe pupils' learning and to scrutinise their work. Together, we reviewed samples of pupils' English and mathematics work. I talked to pupils in lessons and as a group to hear about their views of the school. I considered a range of documentary evidence, including the school's self-evaluation and school development plan. I met with two governors and had a meeting with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust. I also reviewed curriculum planning and the school's analysis of pupils' achievement and attendance. I discussed safeguarding with members of staff and reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation. In addition, I spoke to parents at the start of day and took account of the 59 responses to Parent View and 34 free-text comments. I gathered the views of staff through reviewing the 20 responses to the online staff survey.