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Mrs Nicola Craddock
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Dear Mrs Craddock

Short inspection of Hudson Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 November 2017, 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school has expanded considerably over the past four years. You have set up a resourced provision, with two classes for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders. The school has extended its early years provision to include two-year-old children. In addition, the number of pupils on roll in the other classes in school has increased.

Able supported by your deputy headteacher and early years leader, you have worked relentlessly to raise standards across the school since the previous inspection. You have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses so that you respond quickly to any possible emerging issues. You are determined to ensure that every pupil at Hudson Primary School realises their full potential. Your professional curiosity helps you to seek out the best ideas locally, regionally and nationally, which help you improve the school further, such as your recent improvements to the teaching of mathematics.

You understand that high-quality teaching is key to the school's success. To achieve this, you invest considerably in training, including supporting teachers at the start of their careers. You and your deputy headteacher go the extra mile every day to help your colleagues do a good job. You both have the confidence and support of your staff, who are proud to work at Hudson Primary School.

Hudson is a warm, welcoming, vibrant school where pupils achieve well so that they are well prepared for their next steps. Pupils like their teachers and are keen to do their very best. They look smart in their uniforms, take pride in their work and follow instructions quickly. Pupils enjoy the wealth of learning opportunities offered through the school's rich curriculum, including residential trips, visits, clubs and visitors. Pupils were keen to tell me how informative they had found an anti-bullying workshop, which took place during my visit.

The school is calm and orderly. Your concerted efforts to improve behaviour in the corridors are making a positive difference. Pupils move quietly and sensibly around the building now. Pupils work and play well together. They are adamant that any rare behaviour incidents, for example falling out on the playground, are followed up by staff. Staff help pupils to resolve differences and find solutions to problems. Older pupils and school councillors make a positive contribution to school life, taking their responsibilities seriously.

You make sure that children settle happily in the early years and quickly start to learn new skills. Staff work closely with families and previous settings so that these young children settle quickly. The school's investment in both the indoor and outdoor environments has paid dividends. The early years is a hive of industry. Children were engrossed in a range of activities, including reading, painting and squelching in the mud. Outcomes for these children are improving year on year. Consequently, these children are well prepared for Year 1.

At the previous inspection, inspectors asked the school to raise achievement by ensuring that work is always matched to all pupils' needs. You insist that teaching staff check on pupils' learning on a daily, weekly and half-termly basis. Teachers use this information well to plan lessons so that every pupil is challenged to make the best possible progress. When we looked at work in pupils' books and visited lessons, we saw how much better your most-able pupils are getting on. Consequently, more pupils are achieving the higher standards across the school.

Inspectors also asked the school to improve teaching and learning. You have transformed the way you teach mathematics across the school. Pupils enjoy the wealth of opportunities that teachers now provide. This is improving pupils' skills to reason and solve problems. Teachers make sure that pupils think for themselves and learn from their mistakes. The quality of teaching of writing has improved across the school. Pupils make good use of the time given to edit and redraft their work. Pupils pay heed to the helpful guidance from their teachers and classmates to improve the quality of their work. Pupils relish the range of interesting and exciting opportunities across the curriculum to find things out for themselves. For example, Year 6 pupils enjoyed investigating why bread goes mouldy and what life was like for evacuees in the Second World War.

Teachers, at different stages of their careers, talked highly of the training and support they receive. You have strengthened the school's performance management arrangements so that they improve the quality of teaching. Teachers benefit from opportunities to visit each other's classes. You have created a culture

in which teachers are confident to receive feedback about their work both from leaders and their peers. Teaching staff value their visits to other schools to get new ideas. This has particularly helped your teachers in the resourced provision as well as those teaching staff implementing the new approach to teaching mathematics.

The improvements you have made to teaching have helped to raise standards. Across the school, all groups of pupils make good or better progress from their different starting points. Consequently, pupils are better prepared for their next steps, whether moving up classes or on to high school.

Since the previous inspection, governors have driven key improvements to homework, mathematics and pupil tracking systems. However, a recent reduction in the frequency of meetings has 'taken their eye off the ball'. Governors have not reviewed recent pupils' performance information in a timely manner. Consequently, they are not as up to date about the performance of different groups and the impact of leaders' actions to address any potential issues. Governors were honest with the inspector about their lack of confidence in interpreting the latest school performance information. They recognise the urgency with which they need to address these shortcomings so that they can offer more effective challenge and support to school leaders.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are thorough. Leaders carry out comprehensive checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff undertake frequent training, so they understand their roles and responsibilities. Record-keeping is meticulous. Parents spoke highly of the school's good relationships with external agencies, which help families access the support they need. Pupils are adamant that any very rare incidents of bullying would be dealt with effectively by staff. They are confident that they have a trusted adult with whom they can share any worries. Pupils and parents agree that pupils are well cared for and safe.

Inspection findings

- Governors have been a 'force for good' at Hudson Primary School. Since the previous inspection, they have carried out their duties meticulously. However, recent organisational changes have hampered their ability to be as effective as they would like. Governors are determined to resolve these issues. The local authority and school leaders are confident that governors have the necessary skills, experience and expertise. Governors are aware of the urgency with which they need to meet more regularly and become more competent in analysing data.
- The overwhelming majority of parents are happy with the school. Parents who spoke with the inspector, submitted letters and responded to Ofsted's online survey are impressed by recent improvements in home-school communication. The new classroom communication tool means that parents find out what their children are doing on a daily basis. Moreover, it means that parents can contact

teachers online as well as by telephone or face to face. Parents are confident that staff know their children extremely well and quickly pick up on and alert parents to any concerns. Leaders make sure that all parental concerns are recorded meticulously and followed up assiduously, in line with school policies. Parents of pupils in the resourced provision talk of the 'transformational effect' that the school has had on the lives of these pupils and their families.

- Leaders keep a close eye on the progress of cohorts, groups and individuals across key stage 1. They make sure that additional support is put in as soon as a pupil is at risk of falling behind. Effective teaching, the school's 'rapid response' system and well-considered interventions help pupils, including the most able, to make good progress. The school is adept at settling new pupils in quickly so that they make rapid progress from their different starting points. Pupils who move up from the school's Reception class build on their good start, including in phonics, making strong progress across key stage 1. More of the school's most-able pupils are achieving the high standards of which they are capable.
- Leaders make sure that the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is a high priority for the school. Leaders put a range of strategies in place to help these pupils overcome any identified barriers to learning. For example, some pupils attend the after-school provision, where they receive help in completing homework and read with an adult. Governors require the headteacher to report on the performance of this vulnerable group regularly so they can check on the impact of additional funding. Across the school, these pupils make similar progress to their peers from their different starting points.
- Attendance is a whole-school priority. Leaders have employed a dedicated attendance officer. This officer follows up swiftly any unexplained pupil absence, making phone calls as well as home visits. She makes sure that help is given to those families who are struggling to get their children to school. In addition, she liaises closely with the school nurse to support those children and their families where there are any medical issues. Moreover, leaders no longer authorise term-time holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the termly attendance awards. As a result, attendance is improving, including that of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that governors:

- are more challenging of decisions about pupils' performance
- become more competent in analysing the range of school performance information.

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

Yours sincerely

Pippa Jackson Maitland
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- The inspector met with senior leaders, teaching and support staff, the chair and a member of the governing body. The inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector considered the 94 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspector talked to a group of parents and considered three written responses from parents.
- An inspector met formally with a group of staff and considered the 28 responses to Ofsted's online survey of staff.
- The inspector talked informally to pupils throughout the school day and met formally with a group of pupils.
- The inspector visited classrooms and checked on pupils' work, both in books and on wall displays.
- The inspector looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment, the school's self-evaluation and action plan as well as a range of other documentation.
- The inspector conducted a review of safeguarding, including an evaluation of the school's policies and procedures to keep pupils safe, training records, recruitment checks and record-keeping.