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Mr John Stringer  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Stringer

### **Short inspection of Hasland Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 December 2016, 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 May 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection and you have effected significant improvements in many aspects. As headteacher, you share your very high aspirations for pupils in the school and have created a culture where all can succeed. You are uncompromising in your expectation that the very best possible education is provided for each and every pupil. You have created a highly collaborative team which values every individual. Pupils, parents and staff consider you to be inspirational; they share your vision and are keen to support you in all that you do.

You have a very clear and realistic understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. You and the leadership team are self-reflective and continually evaluate the work that you do so that you can bring about further and sustained improvement.

Pupils enjoy their time at school. You have created a culture of care and success and pupils and staff enjoy celebrating achievements. Pupils' work is displayed in all areas of the school. Their other achievements are celebrated, both through formal displays and via video screens, showing rolling montages of pupils engaging in a variety of experiences, such as outdoor adventure activities. You have created a 'walk of fame', where certificates identify individual pupils' successes and achievement, complete with 'fame' stars. Pupils feel that their efforts are valued and are keen to share what they can do.

You have developed excellent working relationships with parents, who share your high aspirations for pupils' potential. You plan a number of activities to welcome parents into the school and to enable them to participate in their children's learning. For example, during the inspection, parents of Year 5 pupils participated in an art-based workshop, where pupils were creating Christmas puddings from woollen pom-poms as part of their work on the great fire of London. Pupils were keen to explain how this activity linked to their work and clearly enjoyed the opportunity to work with their parents, and those of their peers. Throughout the school, displays are to be seen of previous projects where parents have joined their children in such activities.

Since the last inspection, you have taken effective action to address the areas identified for further improvement. You were keen to ensure that marking practices were more developmental and so have introduced a new system which you call 'learning ladders'. Teachers help pupils to understand what they are learning and what is expected of them in each lesson. Teachers support pupils to assess how well they are doing against these expectations and how they should approach activities. You have made structural changes to ensure that pupils have sufficient time to reflect on their learning, for example by changing timings of lessons.

You have also made significant changes to develop pupils' independence and responsibility. In lessons, you advocate what you call 'the 4 step strategy: look up, look down, look to a partner, look to the teacher'. You encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning, thus developing their resilience and independence. During our visits to classes, we saw pupils making use of this strategy in mathematics lessons and pupils were both encouraged and supported by doing so. You have also taken steps to develop pupils' independence beyond the classroom. For example, pupils now have greater freedom in their use of the school building and demonstrate responsibility in accessing facilities before school. You have created roles of responsibility for older pupils, for example 'peer mediators'. Pupils appreciate these opportunities and are mature in the undertaking of them. Younger pupils also value these roles, both making use of them and aspiring to take on such roles in the future. In creating such opportunities, you are successfully preparing pupils for the next stages in their education.

The last inspection identified the need for improvement in pupils' writing, particularly in their extended writing across the curriculum. You prioritised this in your improvement plans, focusing on staff training and collaboration with other schools, to develop staff expertise in supporting pupils' development in writing. For example, you worked with cluster schools on a 'drama for writing' project and devoted staff training days and staff meetings to the development of the teaching of writing and the sharing of good practice. You have also introduced a new programme for the teaching of grammar. You have ensured that there are appropriate opportunities for pupils to write in a range of genres and for different purposes, and have celebrated pupils' success. As such, pupils have developed a

love of writing. They are proud of their work and keen to show it to others. Outcomes in writing have improved since the last inspection and continue to improve. In 2016, pupils' outcomes in writing were in the top 10% nationally.

As part of your self-evaluation of the school's performance you have identified the need for greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the school. You rightly identify areas of particular strength, for example teaching in Year 6, and understand fully where teaching is less strong and how you would like it to improve. You carry out rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning across the school. As headteacher, you undertake regular lesson observations and are insightful in your feedback to staff, who are keen to respond and improve their practice further. When we visited lessons, you and the deputy headteacher were clear about the strengths we observed and were quick to identify aspects that were less strong. This exemplifies the strengths in your leadership.

Governors are highly committed to the school and share in your vision and values. They share a wide range of experience and individuals are keen to develop their knowledge and understanding further.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have created a culture of safeguarding across the whole school. All staff take their responsibilities seriously to ensure the safety and well-being of individual pupils. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have developed your record-keeping so that it is of even higher quality than previously. Levels of staff training are high and staff and governors have a thorough and up-to-date knowledge of the safeguarding agenda. The curriculum teaches pupils about personal well-being and safety. Pupils know and understand how to keep themselves safe. They report that incidents of bullying are rare but are confident it is dealt with, when it occurs.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leadership at all levels is a strength of the school. Leaders are highly evaluative in their review of the school's performance and continually reflect on the impact of their work. Leaders have a clear understanding of the schools' strengths and weaknesses and detailed plans are in place to effect further improvement.
- Staff are fully supportive of leaders and share in their vision and desire to provide the best possible education for pupils. They appreciate the changes that have been made since the last inspection. Staff with whom I spoke described the atmosphere in the school as being 'vibrant and awake'.
- Recruitment has been difficult and you rightly expect to appoint staff of only the highest calibre. Support for new staff is excellent.
- There are a number of job-shares within the school. You ensure that communication is strong and pupils benefit from the variety of experiences these partnerships offer.
- Governance is becoming stronger. Governors have carried out a skills audit and have identified areas of further training needs. Leaders and governors are aware

of the need to strengthen governance further by ensuring that all governors are equally perceptive and insightful when holding leaders to account.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and engages pupils' interests. It provides opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing skills. The mathematics curriculum is now more challenging.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted in all aspects of school life. Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences, such as residential visits, outdoor adventure activities and music and the arts. Pupils are creative and appreciate these experiences. They are well prepared for the next stages in their education.
- Leaders have ensured that additional funding, for example the primary physical education (PE) and sports and the pupil premium funding, is used to good effect. Leaders track pupils' progress and use the funds to intervene when necessary. As a result, most disadvantaged pupils make at least good progress and all pupils have benefited from extended sports opportunities.
- The quality of teaching is extremely strong in some areas of the school, for example in Year 6. As a result, pupils make very good progress over time. However, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in other year groups, which can slow the pace of pupils' progress. Leaders are aware of this and are taking appropriate action to support staff and share good practice.
- Teachers have a good understanding of what pupils can do and plan lessons accordingly. There is an appropriate level of challenge in most lessons. In some lessons, however, the most able pupils could be challenged to undertake more difficult work more quickly.
- Teachers plan lessons which engage pupils' interests. For example, Year 4 pupils were solving open-ended subtraction problems using characters from 'The Simpsons' as part of a 'murder investigation'. Pupils told me that this made their learning fun and interesting. Their concentration during this activity was excellent.
- Pupils are keen to understand how to improve their work, and where they respond to teachers' feedback they make at least good progress.
- I listened to a number of pupils of different ages and abilities read. They were all keen to share their books with me and explained how the school has helped them to develop strong reading habits. Pupils were interested in their books because they had been allowed to make their own selections, but felt supported in choosing books of an appropriate level. The most able pupils who read to me did so with fluency and flair and were able to determine the meaning of new, yet more complex words. For example, one pupil explained the meaning of 'attributes' in relation to a character's football skills. Less confident readers were able to use their decoding skills to work out unfamiliar words. All pupils explained the narratives of their stories and made appropriate predictions based on their understanding of character and motivation. Pupils appreciated the variety of books on offer, both in their classrooms and the school library.
- Pupils make at least good progress in all subjects. Following a decline in standards in 2012 and 2013, outcomes for pupils have improved and continue to do so. In 2016, key stage 2 outcomes for reading, writing and mathematics were significantly above national averages. Pupils' performance in writing was particularly strong and outcomes were in the top 10% of all pupils nationally.

- Disadvantaged pupils make very good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. The most able disadvantaged pupils do not make as much progress in reading as they do in other subjects. In 2016, disadvantaged most-able pupils' progress in reading was below the national average.
- Although still significantly above national averages, pupils' progress in reading is not as strong as it is in mathematics and writing. Leaders are aware of this relative weakness and plans are in place to ensure that the good progress in reading is improved further, so that it matches that made in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils behave extremely well both in lessons and around school. They are polite and courteous towards each other and towards adults. They demonstrate respect and are tolerant of diversity. They are supportive of one another, collaborating and sharing well. They are confident and articulate.
- Pupils are extremely proud of their school; they value the opportunities provided and are keen to succeed.
- Parents have highly positive views of the school. They consider the school to be inclusive and supportive. They say that they are kept well informed about their children's progress. Parents hold you, as headteacher, in very high regard and are extremely appreciative of the leadership and improvements you have brought about.
- Pupils' attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils, is above the national average. Pupils are punctual at the start of the day.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in reading, particularly for the disadvantaged most able pupils, continues to improve so that it is in line with the strong progress made in writing and mathematics
- strategies already introduced are embedded to:
  - share good practice so that all teaching is as good as the strongest seen in the school
  - support new and temporary staff to develop their practice and maintain the at least good quality of teaching, learning and assessment
  - further strengthen governance to hold leaders to account more closely.

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

Yours sincerely

Deborah Mosley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, my focus was on whether the improvement in outcomes was sustainable, the effectiveness of leadership and management and to ensure that safeguarding arrangements were effective. I held discussions with members of the leadership team, other staff and governors. I also spoke by telephone with the school's improvement partner. I spoke to pupils informally and in their lessons. I looked at pupils' books and talked to them about their work. I listened to a number of pupils read and spoke to them about their reading experiences. I spoke with parents and considered the 70 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and also the 64 free text responses. I also considered the 13 staff and 117 pupil responses to the online questionnaire. I scrutinised improvement plans and other school documentation, including monitoring records and information relating to pupils' well-being, behaviour and attendance. I also viewed the information published on the school's website.