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Mrs Karen Hyams
Principal
Hill Top Primary Academy
Batley Road
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Dear Mrs Hyams

Short inspection of Hill Top Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in October 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your strong leadership has created a culture of high expectations for pupils' achievement and, as a result, pupils are securing good outcomes across the school. You are ably supported by an effective deputy principal. Together, you work closely with staff, governors and the trust to sustain a strong sense of teamwork and an ethos in which pupils can thrive. As a result, Hill Top Primary Academy is a rapidly improving school and has the capacity to improve further.

You and your leadership team have an accurate view of the quality of education that the school provides. You have devised a thorough action plan for improvement, which you have based on a precise analysis of assessment information. You are clear about the intended impact of your actions on pupils' achievement.

Pupils are polite and friendly. Their behaviour around the school and on the playground is consistently good. Classrooms are calm working environments. Pupils display positive attitudes to learning, listening well to the opinions of others and quickly settling to work. Relationships throughout the school between staff and pupils are warm and positive.

Leaders, teachers and governors work in close collaboration with other schools in the trust to develop leadership and improve teaching and learning. This is contributing to the continuing success of the school and the quality of education it

provides. Your early years setting is seen as an example of good practice because of strong leadership, excellent provision and the good progress children make.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to improve the effectiveness of the governing body. This you have successfully done. Working closely with the trust, you have ensured that governors receive appropriate training to develop their skills, and new appointments to the governing body have specific expertise. As a result, governors are well informed and work well with school leaders to drive improvements.

You were also asked to improve the progress of less-able pupils. You have ensured that teaching assistants receive professional development opportunities to improve their questioning skills. This enables them to challenge pupils to think deeper about what they are learning. Observations of learning activities during the inspection showed that teaching assistants have a good understanding of their roles and provide effective support to the pupils they are working with, including those pupils who are less able. During these observations, it was also noticeable that teachers support pupils of different abilities equally well, something that you insist upon.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. Staff have benefited from appropriate training and understand what to do should a safeguarding issue or concern arise. All your policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, including safeguarding checks on adults working at the school, meet requirements and are up to date.

When necessary, you work effectively with the trust's support services and external agencies to ensure that everything is being done to safeguard children and minimise risk. Parents are confident that their children are safe and well cared for at the school.

Inspection findings

- As part of the inspection we looked at the differences in attainment between girls and boys. Assessment information for the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2018 shows that a greater proportion of girls attained expected and higher standards than boys. This was the case for reading and writing in key stage 1 and for mathematics in key stage 2. Inspection evidence shows that you and your leaders are addressing this and have introduced strategies that are improving the progress of both boys and girls.
- Although there are reasons as to why girls achieved significantly better than boys in key stage 1 in 2018, you are making sure that any differences are addressed. You have provided additional classroom support for this cohort of pupils, ensured that the curriculum appeals to boys as well as girls and provided opportunities for outdoor learning each week. This is having a positive impact, and differences in achievement between girls and boys are diminishing.
- Pupils currently in key stage 2 are making good progress in mathematics. You have introduced a new curriculum for mathematics and provided high-quality professional development for teachers. As a result, teachers plan meaningful and

wide-ranging opportunities to solve problems, investigate mathematical ideas and develop mathematical reasoning. Observations of learning activities in key stage 2, and work in pupils' books, show that both girls and boys are achieving well and there are no noticeable differences in the progress they are making.

- Leaders have placed a strong emphasis on improving the teaching of reading across the school, especially for pupils who are capable of attaining the higher standards. This includes a significant investment in reading resources and a different approach to teaching reading. There are signs that this is helping to improve reading for most-able pupils in key stage 2 but the impact of these initiatives is yet to be seen.
- You have introduced plans to increase the proportion of pupils attaining greater depth in key stage 1. High-quality professional development for teachers and teaching assistants and a collaborative approach within the trust to improve teaching, learning and assessment are leading to improvements. Inspection evidence shows that teaching and learning in key stage 1 is strong. Pupils are challenged with activities that make them think harder about what they are learning. However, the impact of these actions on those pupils who are most able is not evident yet.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- strategies to improve the progress of most-able pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 are firmly embedded.

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

Yours sincerely

Alan Chaffey
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the deputy principal. I also met with the chief executive of the multi-academy trust and had a telephone conversation with the chair of the governing body. I spoke with pupils during lessons and when listening to them read. I visited all classes in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2, and I looked at pupils' books. I scrutinised various documents, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and safeguarding documents. I considered the 58 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and 51 free-text responses to Parent View.