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Mrs Sarah Hetherington  
Headteacher  
Colden Junior and Infant School  
Smithy Lane  
Colden  
Hebden Bridge  
West Yorkshire  
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Dear Mrs Hetherington

### **Short inspection of Colden Junior and Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 September 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 June 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. In that time, changes in leadership and staffing have been considerable and there has also been a decline in pupil numbers. However, an almost new governing body has successfully secured a staff team who share the same ambition to continually improve outcomes for pupils and ensure that they receive a rounded education. As acting headteacher you are leading the school with commitment and determination. In the short time in your post as acting headteacher, having previously been the assistant headteacher, you have already gained the support of staff, pupils and parents and carers. You have developed a learning culture among staff. They are eager to reflect on how well their teaching improves pupils' learning so that they can contribute to the school's journey of improvement at the heart of the local community.

Governors have taken steps to ensure that you are well supported in your new role, as they recognise the need to build leadership capacity throughout the school. Governors have considered their influence on improving outcomes when identifying training and development needs. This makes sure that they are appropriately skilled to carry out their duties. Governors are increasingly effective when using these skills to scrutinise data and hold school leaders to account for pupils' outcomes.

After a period of staffing turbulence and some negative parent views in recent years, the governors have worked very hard to listen to parents and help them to

contribute their ideas in positive ways, for example through a working party. Parents are now highly positive about the school and appreciate the increasing consultation and transparency in the communication they receive.

Pupils' outcomes are strong and improving overall at every key stage. Leaders responded promptly to a disappointing dip in standards in 2016. The result of leaders' actions was clearly seen in the improved outcomes in 2017. The area for improvement identified at the last inspection, to raise attainment in mathematics and writing, has been addressed well. By the end of key stage 2 in 2017, a very high proportion of pupils met and exceeded the expected standards in these subjects. Leaders are not complacent, however, and acknowledge that there is still room for improvement. This is particularly the case for the Year 1 phonics screening check, as the proportion of pupils meeting the standard dropped in 2017.

Pupils are incredibly supportive of each other, demonstrated by the caring attitudes shown when they cooperated together in a mixed-age group. Their very high attendance, which is well above the national average, is testament to their enjoyment of school and the value they see in their education.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of keeping pupils safe. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are stored securely. The training that staff receive makes sure that they know how to recognise and respond to signs of concern. Effective systems are in place for the recruitment of new staff. Governors and leaders have acted promptly to respond to concerns around the safety of the school grounds and have secured the site with fencing and secure access.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They learn about how to stay safe on the internet, when crossing a road and waiting for the school bus. Pupils say that there is rarely any bullying, but if it does happen they would know how to deal with it and have confidence that adults would listen and resolve any issues.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders have been effective in making checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. A commitment to staff training and sharing good practice within school and in the local area has resulted in the good and improving teaching seen across the school. Through your checks on teaching, you identified that some pupils could have better learning behaviours to support them in achieving even higher outcomes. High expectations from staff and improving learning behaviours are now evident. Leaders have also been willing to listen and respond to advice from the local authority, taking immediate action and resulting in a wide range of improvements. You and the governors are honest in your evaluations of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A clear and simple self-evaluation document effectively highlights the main priorities for improvement.

- The school's effective assessment system helps everyone keep a check on the progress that pupils are making. This means that staff can identify any gaps in pupils' learning. In addition, your knowledge of each pupil as an individual is successful in securing the appropriate support, should any pupil need extra help to catch up. You have identified that due to the drop in the proportion of pupils who met the phonics standard by the end of Year 1 in 2017, the pupils who did not meet the standard will require additional support in Year 2. You also have plans in place to make sure that a greater proportion of pupils meet the standard by the end of Year 1 in 2018.
- In 2016 in writing at key stages 1 and 2, attainment dipped below the national average. In 2017, as a result of leaders' actions, attainment improved considerably at both key stages. Careful tracking of pupils' progress has successfully identified any gaps in learning, and this has supported teachers in planning work which is well matched to pupils' needs. Staff training and working with other schools have also been effective in increasing the accuracy of teachers' assessment. Pupils are now more involved in improving their own writing and current pupils are making good progress. However, leaders are aware that some pupils need to make accelerated progress to catch up and reach the standards they are capable of.
- In 2016 in mathematics, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard at key stages 1 and 2 was above average. However, the proportion who exceeded the standard was below the national average. This rightly concerned leaders, as some pupils had not made sufficient progress. In 2017, outcomes improved dramatically at both the expected standard and for pupils exceeding the standard. Leaders have developed teachers' subject knowledge and increased their awareness of the expectations of the mathematics curriculum. Consequently, pupils are now making good progress and activities are planned to meet the needs of individuals, providing appropriate challenge.
- You are committed to providing pupils with a broad curriculum. Learning activities have been designed to provide purposeful and memorable experiences. Pupils relish these opportunities and show interest and enjoyment in their learning. Pupils enjoy taking responsibilities in school and being involved in how the school operates. For example, Year 6 pupils were proud to talk about how their ideas had contributed to a new system for supporting good behaviour. Leaders recognise that leadership is in its early stages of development with some teachers and leaders who are new to their posts. They are therefore keen to develop each member of staff to take on responsibilities for subject leadership. This will support pupils in developing subject-specific skills and achieving even higher standards in a broad range of subjects beyond English and mathematics.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- an increasing proportion of pupils meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check

- leadership capacity continues to develop so that the school is in a strong position to keep improving.

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

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I evaluated documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, governing body minutes, attendance records and information about safeguarding. I spoke with several parents at the start of the school day and considered 83 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I met with a group of pupils from a range of year groups and spoke individually with each teacher. You and I visited each classroom together to observe teaching and learning, hear pupils read and scrutinise pupils' work in books.