

Kate Fox
Headteacher
Hemingford Grey Primary School.

Dear Kate,

Hemingford Grey Primary School two-day review of teaching, learning and assessment

Following my visit to the school on 8th December 2017 and 16th January 2018, I write to report to you my findings.

Your school was judged to be good, by Ofsted, in October 2014. This is the fourth formal review I have been asked to conduct since the inspection.

During this review, I visited the key stage 2 learning zone and a number of small-group activities. I also observed learning in the key stage 1 classrooms and learning zone and within the early years class. I looked at a range of assessment information and other documents. Jointly, with leaders, I looked at work in pupils' books to see how effective leaders have been to respond to the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted in October 2014 and also outcomes in the Analyse School Performance (ASP) and Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR). I observed behaviour during lunchtime, both in the dining hall and outside. Having previously evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding, it did not form part of a focus on this visit.

The outcome of my review is that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment **continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained and further improved the good quality of education in the school. You have recognised appropriate priorities on which to focus in order to ensure your school continues to be good. You responded swiftly to the key stage 2 outcomes in 2017 and promptly identified the particular combination of circumstances that led to disappointing progress, particularly in mathematics. You have put in place effective strategies to ensure that the trend of improvement seen across the rest of the school continues.

You think carefully about the ways in which your leaders carry out their work and make sensible suggestions. Your leaders carry out regular monitoring to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment continues to be good. Leaders have an accurate view of where further improvements are needed. They ensure that appropriate support and training is in place for teachers to help boost the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further.

You have addressed the area for improvement from the last inspection report:

1. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved, because teachers are now making better use of assessment information to plan work for all abilities, particularly the most able. Teachers are also providing better opportunities for pupils to tackle tasks on their own. Teachers are making sure that pupils benefit from a rich and vibrant curriculum which is planned around their needs and aspirations. The feedback which teachers provide enables pupils to make good progress in their reading, writing and mathematics work.

Outcomes:

In the early years, 76% of children reached a good level of development

In Year 1, 93% of pupils reached the expected standard in phonics (compared with 81% nationally)

Standards by the end of key stage 1:

- Reading: 80% of pupils reached the expected standard (compared with 76% nationally) and 45% reached a greater depth (compared with 25% nationally).
- Writing: 73% of pupils reached the expected standard (compared with 68% nationally) and 25% reached a greater depth (compared with 16% nationally).
- Mathematics: 84% of pupils reached the expected standard (compared with 75% nationally) and 30% reached a greater depth (compared with 21% nationally).

Standards by the end of key stage 2:

- Reading: 74% of pupils reached the expected standard (compared with 72% nationally) and 26% reached a greater depth (compared with 25% nationally).
- Writing: 81% of pupils reached the expected standard (compared with 76% nationally) and 16% reached a greater depth (compared with 18% nationally).
- Mathematics: 68% of pupils reached the expected standard (compared with 75% nationally) and 6% reached a greater depth (compared with 23% nationally).
- Combined attainment was 61% (compared with 61% nationally).

Progress:

- The reading progress score was -1.63 and in line with the national average.
- The writing progress score was -1.25 and in line with the national average.
- The mathematics progress score was -3.60 and well below the national average.

Floor Standards:

The government's current floor standard is met if at least 65% of pupils meet the combined reading, writing and mathematics; or the school achieves sufficient progress in all three subjects (-5 in reading and mathematics and -7 in writing).

The school meets the government's current floor standards.

Coasting Schools:

The 'coasting' definition covers school performance over 3 years. A school is identified as coasting if

- in 2014 and 2015, fewer than 85% of pupils achieved level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics and below the median percentage of pupils made expected progress in all of reading, writing and mathematics, and
- in 2016, fewer than 85% of children achieved the new expected standard and average progress made by pupils in reading or writing or mathematics was below the level set against the new primary progress measures.

Hemingford Grey is not a coasting school.

Leaders have accurately recognised the priorities for the school following the results in summer 2017. You have analysed thoroughly the reasons for the standards and progress compared with recent years and have immediately and successfully tackled the areas needing improvement. You have produced a very helpful supplement to the self-evaluation, exploring in detail the actions being taken to improve provision and outcomes in mathematics.

You are rightly focusing on boosting the pupils' outcomes in the core and foundation subjects, particularly mathematics. Your leadership team has high expectations that all teachers must see this as a priority. You have put in place appropriate strategies that are already seen to be making a difference. Across the rest of the school, leaders collect detailed information to measure the progress of pupils and plot their attainment. This school's assessment data shows that across all year groups a large majority of pupils are working at standards expected for their age and making good progress in their reading, writing and mathematics.

Leaders have developed robust procedures to monitor the work in pupils' books. This work is subject to regular internal and external moderation. As a result, leaders have an accurate understanding of what represents good progress and what could be improved. Leaders also use this opportunity to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and provide individual staff with detailed and helpful feedback.

In mathematics books, there is very clear evidence that teachers set challenging work which captures the imagination and interest of pupils. This is because teachers have good subject knowledge and a secure understanding of the expectations required for their class. Pupils respond by working hard and taking pride in their achievements. Teachers are skilled at keeping a watchful eye on the progress during lessons and step in quickly to adjust tasks if pupils have understood a task or concept and are ready for more. As a result, pupils do not spend unnecessary time rehearsing what they already know or can easily achieve, but are moved on to challenging work which causes them to think hard about what they are expected to do. The quality of work in English books is also good, and the majority of pupils in all groups (SEN, most able, disadvantaged and those with a low prior attainment) are making good progress.

In the activities observed, teachers are alert to how quickly their pupils complete a task and provide further challenge so that pupils make the progress of which they are capable. For example, in a Year 6 'Maths Meeting' (planned to improve fluency and recall of key facts), the teacher made sure that pupils did not spend too much recapping prior learning but moved quickly on to appropriately challenging work.

You place great importance on the emotional well-being of your pupils. This is reflected in many aspects of life in your school. Classroom displays promote emotional literacy; pupils understand the school's core values. It is clear from visiting your classrooms and speaking with your pupils that your expectations for high standards of behaviour and welfare benefit your pupils greatly. Pupils are respectful and polite, towards each other and with the adults in school. They are able to explain clearly what they are learning and the ways in which their teachers help them to improve. Pupils take pride in their work because of the expectations of their teachers.

Your vision to provide a rich and varied curriculum is clear. You are successfully ensuring that pupils enjoy learning across the broad range of subjects. Outdoor learning is a strong aspect of the school's work. For example, pupils in the Year 1 learning zone were measuring and comparing bone length as part of their science topic on the human skeleton. The key stage 1 learning zone shed also is very well resourced and no opportunity is missed for pupils to use and apply their maths skills and knowledge. For example, when making bird feeder, pupils were expected to carefully weigh the amount of nuts and seed that would be incorporated into the fat-balls.

Behaviour at lunchtime is exemplary and older pupils fulfil their role as Playground Pals exceptionally well. Older pupils also respond well to their responsibility they are given to help the smooth running of serving lunch and making sure tables are cleared. Playtimes are well supervised, well organised, well resourced, relaxed and friendly opportunities for pupils to enjoy.

Your leaders nurture confidence and aspiration in your pupils, especially in those with low self-esteem. Leaders are committed to enabling pupils to take responsibility for their own learning, recognising how this increases their motivation so that they make better progress. One point for teachers to consider is if 'things don't go according to plan', or are not typical, then do not hesitate to step in to refocus the task or stop the activity.

You clearly know the school very well and are clear about the strengths as well as the areas for further development; as a result, your self-evaluation is accurate.

Next steps for the school leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Continue with the drive to accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics, so more exceed expectations for their age.
- Continue to encourage teachers to keep a watchful eye on what is going on, and step in quickly to adjust tasks.
- Do not be afraid to stop and redirect a lesson/activity if it is not typical or going according to plan.

I trust you found my visit helpful. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you, the staff and pupils at Hemingford Grey Primary School every success in the future.

Kind regards,



Jim Alexander