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28 May 2025

Demelza Higginson
Acting Headteacher
Heathcoat Primary School
Broad Lane
Tiverton
Devon
EX16 5HE

Dear Miss Higginson,

Monitoring inspection of a school not in a category of concern of Heathcoat Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 30 April 2025, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school meets the monitoring threshold as set out in the [Monitoring Inspection Handbook](#).

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key and (where applicable) provision judgements, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the local authority and the primary lead for the managed partnership the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also carried out lesson visits, scrutinised geography and science curriculum information, looked at some pupils' work and spoke with some staff and pupils. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but some aspects of the school need further improvement.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection in March 2024, there have been changes to the federation, leadership structures and governance of the school. From January 2025, the school formally entered a management partnership which has supported leaders at all levels with additional capacity to bring about improvements. Since September 2025, the number of pupils on roll has decreased. This has resulted in a restructure of classes. Pupils now learn in mixed-aged classes.

The leadership team has worked with rigour to take decisive actions to improve the quality of education, including the early years provision, within the school. Leaders have made clear, evidence-informed curriculum choices. For example, in the Reception Year, the approach to developing children's writing has been successful. The school has welcomed support from the management partnership and sought opportunities to visit other schools and settings. Significant work to develop subject leaders' confidence and expertise has been effective. Subject leaders now oversee their subject area well and take appropriate action when needed. Throughout this school improvement journey, you have carefully considered the professional development needs, well-being and workload of staff. Staff are highly supportive and engaged with this work. They are extremely positive about the impact these improvements are having on pupils' learning.

The school has prioritised improving the quality of education so pupils learn an ambitious curriculum. You and other leaders have considered what pupils need to learn and have sequenced this cohesively. In geography and science, pupils use resources such as learning organisers to remember what they have learned before. Teaching successfully builds on this prior knowledge. The positive impact of this work can be seen when talking with pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They talk knowledgeably about their science and geography topics and take pride in their learning. For example, in science, younger pupils learn which animals live in different habitats and can link this to their learning about urban areas. However, you acknowledge that the curriculum improvements are not as well developed in some subjects within the wider curriculum. You have implemented sensible timescales to address this, working closely with subject leaders. In these subject areas, you are continuing to refine and sequence learning and widen pupils' opportunities to learn more broadly about the subject. This includes how pupils learn to work scientifically in science or undertake fieldwork in geography.

Alongside staff, you have developed and continue to review approaches to check how well pupils learn. Staff use regular 'retrieval tasks' well. They ensure that pupils revisit important knowledge routinely. End-of-topic 'showcases' are new and celebrate pupils' learning. These new initiatives are having a positive impact. Teachers can identify pupils' misconceptions in science and geography promptly and put in place suitable learning to address them effectively. The school is ambitious for pupils and places their needs at the centre of the improvements being implemented. Careful adaptations support pupils with SEND to learn well. You acknowledge that while pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are improving, there is more to do to address historical gaps in pupils' learning.

The school is committed to providing the best offer for pupils. You have broken down improvement priorities into small, measurable, precise actions. Governors and leaders in the management partnership work closely and purposefully with the school to review these priorities and plan suitable next steps. Recently, there have been changes to the membership of the governing board. Governors have not been complacent. They have acted quickly to provide valuable support for staff and leaders to improve the school. However, governors are aware that they need to further strengthen how they assure themselves of the impact of these changes.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of governors, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Devon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Donna Briggs
His Majesty's Inspector