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Mrs K Morris
Headteacher
The Meadows Primary School
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Dear Mrs Morris

Short inspection of The Meadows Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 February 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You provide strong leadership and a clear direction for school improvement. As a result, pupils continue to make good progress in their learning. You set high expectations for staff and have devised clear structures to secure consistently strong practice. You have established a culture where every person is valued and respected. Consequently, staff and pupils are proud to be a part of the school. Governors provide support and challenge and have played a crucial role in maintaining the school's overall effectiveness.

You and your leaders have addressed the areas identified for improvement from the previous inspection. Leaders hold well-organised and focused meetings to discuss pupils' progress. Leaders and teachers set targets for pupils and monitor rates of progress carefully. This has resulted in improved outcomes for groups of pupils. Pupils' achievement in writing has improved because teachers provide clear guidance to pupils. This guidance enables pupils to construct accurate sentences appropriate to their age.

Leaders effectively hold teachers to account and carefully monitor the impact that teaching is having on learning. Leaders are excellent role models and support teachers to improve their practice. This clear focus on high-quality teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement in all year groups. However, leaders

recognise that the development of pupils' understanding of what they are reading and their ability to reason in mathematics are areas for further development.

Pupils' behaviour and positive attitudes to learning are a strength of the school. The pupils I spoke to during the inspection showed great respect and are proud of their school. The emphasis placed on school values has had a direct impact on the courtesy demonstrated by all members of the school community.

The parents that I spoke to, and those who responded to Ofsted's survey, say that they find staff approachable. Parents are particularly pleased with how well staff keep them updated about their child's progress and school life. The newly revised school website and weekly newsletters provide timely information which parents appreciate. Parents comment that the home-link books work well and that their children are happy at school. Parents value the range of after-school clubs which even include indoor curling.

Governors have a good understanding of the progress pupils are making. Some governors have specific responsibility for supporting the development of key areas of the curriculum, such as reading. Their joint work with leaders is helping improve outcomes. Some governors are directly involved in strategies that have helped to improve attainment in reading. This has included reading with pupils to develop their fluency.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements comply with statutory guidance. You monitor safeguarding records effectively. Pre-recruitment checks on the suitability of all staff are carried out and reviewed regularly. All staff are appropriately trained. A high proportion of staff are regularly trained to ensure that there is a strong degree of expertise in paediatric first aid and other aspects of child protection.

Leaders rigorously monitor safeguarding referrals to the local authority. The school works closely with other agencies and employs a learning mentor to ensure that appropriate support is put in place.

Pupils feel happy and safe in school. The school teaches pupils how to stay safe in and out of school, including online.

Inspection findings

- The school has worked tirelessly with groups of parents and pupils to encourage more regular attendance. The creation of a breakfast club and 'Early Bird' club has helped to raise attendance. The school has worked with external agencies to provide additional support. Consequently, attendance for vulnerable groups of pupils has now risen above 90%.

- Rewards such as bronze, silver and gold certificates provide an incentive for pupils to attend regularly. You actively promote high attendance and discourages families from taking holiday in term time.
- In response to the outcomes of teachers' assessments at key stage 1 in 2016, leaders identified boys and disadvantaged pupils as groups who required additional support. The school has put in place effective target setting and monitoring systems to track the progress of these pupils. Where necessary, additional adult support and teaching has been provided to accelerate progress.
- Your current assessment information shows that improvement work has been effective in improving rates of progress. Furthermore, your work is ensuring that a greater proportion of pupils are now on track to meet the expected standard in forthcoming years. For example, in the current Year 2 class, the proportion of pupils on track to reach the standard expected for their age in reading and writing is greater than that seen nationally last year. In mathematics, the proportion is in line.
- The school has taken effective steps to strengthen the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics in response to the raised expectations of the new curriculum. Leaders have prioritised improving teachers' questioning, so that they can better develop pupils' reasoning in mathematics.
- Leaders have focused on developing reading fluency so that all pupils can read with confidence. They are supporting staff in questioning pupils effectively during guided reading to further develop their reading skills.
- Work in pupils' books shows that they make good progress in developing their writing skills.
- The school has rightly identified that diminishing the difference in attainment between vulnerable groups and others is a continued priority in early years and key stage 1. Monitoring is rigorous to ensure that the gap is diminishing.
- The overall proportion of children achieving a good level of development in the Reception class has exceeded the national average year on year but pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds have achieved less well than their peers. However, disadvantaged pupils' needs are now more precisely identified. As a result, interventions to improve pupils' language skills are ensuring that a greater proportion of children are ready for the transition into Year 1.
- 'Learning journey' books are used in the Reception Year to capture the progress that children make over time. Work in these books demonstrates that children's skills are developed through a wide range of activities across the curriculum. Adults are well trained and the setting is well led by an experienced early years leader. However, opportunities for children to practise their writing skills are limited, often to single words or letters. This was also the case in number work. As a result, some children may not be fully prepared for the increased demands of the curriculum in Year 1.
- The school has established whole-school training, including opportunities for teachers to work alongside leaders and share what they do in their classrooms. As a result, leaders have effectively improved teachers' questioning skills. School assessment information demonstrates the positive impact of this support. For

example, Year 6 pupils are making better rates of progress and a higher proportion are on track to reach the standard expected for their age in reading and mathematics.

- In key stage 2, a range of effective strategies to improve mathematics are resulting in better rates of progress. Pupils are able to readily access new resources to help them develop their independence and problem-solving skills.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff continue to work with families to reduce any unnecessary absence
- teachers in the early years focus more sharply on making sure that children are well prepared for the increased expectations in writing and mathematics in key stage 1
- adults continue to use effective questioning to ensure that pupils fully understand what they have read and promote deeper understanding in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Blackburn
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

At the start of the inspection I met with you to review the school's self-evaluation and school development plan. During our discussions we agreed several key lines of enquiry.

I discussed the work of the school with you, the deputy headteacher and with middle leaders. I also considered the 29 responses to Parent View and 20 responses to the staff survey. I met with parents at the school gate and discussed with pupils the extent to which they feel safe and their views on learning and behaviour.

I held a discussion with the local authority's representative and members of the governing body. I considered documentation provided by the school and information posted on the school's website. I reviewed the school's single central record and an analysis of attendance information.

I visited classes to observe learning and undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work in

writing. I looked at children's learning journeys in the Reception Year and listened to pupils reading in Years 2 and 6.