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Mrs Judith Kemplay
Headteacher
Melbury Primary School
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Dear Mrs Kemplay

Short inspection of Melbury Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 November 2015, with Martin Finch, Her Majesty's Inspector, 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 March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

You have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Working with the governing body, senior leaders and the staff, you have created a calm, orderly and purposeful school, in which pupils learn enthusiastically. The pupils behave well and have positive attitudes towards learning as they move through the school. You have consciously made it a key part of the purpose of the school to achieve this. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school is on the up. The senior leaders and the governing body are focused effectively on improving the school systematically. You set clear priorities and take appropriate action, with positive results. You are well aware of the challenges that remain for the school. These include continuing to improve attendance and making sure that disadvantaged pupils, at all key stages, do as well as other pupils. You are working in a sensible and planned way to tackle them.

You have made good progress in tackling the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. You have put in place a good range of activities to check on the quality of teaching. Where necessary, you have taken direct action to improve the weakest teaching. Your well-judged approach has secured improvements in teaching throughout the school.

The classrooms are vibrant places and the learning is stimulating for the pupils. The teachers plan a good range of engaging activities and tasks for the pupils, which

grab their interest and contribute well to developing their positive attitudes to learning. The pupils enjoy the lessons and have a strong sense of how the activities help them to learn. At all key stages, teachers are making more effective use of information about how well the pupils are doing, in order to plan work for them and to inform them about their progress. As a result, the pupils are able to talk meaningfully about a range of things that they have learned.

You identify astutely particular aspects of the pupils' achievement that need to be improved and then take effective action. For example, you picked out a particular issue with boys' writing in Key Stage 1. You introduced a range of novel and stimulating activities, designed to stimulate the boys' interest in writing, making good use particularly of opportunities to learn outdoors. As a result, there was a marked improvement in how well boys did in the Key Stage 1 writing test in 2015.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is at the core of the school's work. The responsible persons, members of the governing body and the staff are trained regularly and frequently. You make sure that all the staff are up to date with the latest government guidance, including new areas of potential concern. The governing body checks on this aspect of the school's work actively. Your policies, systems and processes for identifying, recording and acting on any concerns are fit for purpose. You keep on top of things. As a result, the pupils feel safe and their parents confirm that they are kept safe.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and managers are perceptive in identifying areas for improvement at the school. They have demonstrated that, when they identify an area for improvement, they take appropriate action to good effect. As a result, the school is improving progressively and continuously.
- The impact of the changes you have made is most apparent at Key Stage 2, which you identified as the top priority for the school. The achievement of the pupils has improved, particularly the proportions making at least the progress expected of them.
- In 2015, the proportions making at least the progress expected were above the national averages in all subjects and, in reading and in writing, it was all pupils who did so. Those figures mean that, by the end of Key Stage 2, you have closed the gap between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils at the school and nationally. There is still, however, a difference between how well the disadvantaged pupils do in the national tests compared with other pupils, although the difference is less now than it was.
- The pupils' achievement has improved at Key Stage 1 also. There were substantial improvements in all subjects in 2015, which reversed the decline in 2014. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 1 improved well also, but the difference between how well these pupils do in the tests, compared

with others, is still not as good by the end of this key stage than by the end of Key Stage 2. This is the case in the early years as well.

- Both parents and pupils expressed justifiably positive views about the school. They, too, have a sense of it getting progressively better.
- The pupils are modestly proud of the contribution that they make to the school. They spoke with quiet conviction about how the Playground Buddies help the teachers to get good behaviour around the school. The Buddies are fully prepared to challenge any misbehaviour themselves, such as racist or homophobic language, and to report it to the teachers when necessary.
- The pupils acknowledged that people misbehave sometimes, but gave the school a score of 'nine out of ten' for behaviour. They made it clear that any misbehaviour is dealt with effectively by the staff; that is something that parents said as well.
- The pupils were able to describe to me various ways in which they had learned at school about how to stay safe. They knew about how to deal with inappropriate or worrying content on the internet and with suspicious text messages. They spoke about how the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) programme had taught them the skills to be able to communicate any concerns and worries effectively and had given them the confidence to do so.
- Attendance has improved. At the time of this inspection, the overall level was just above the latest national average. The governing body has played an important role in stiffening the school's resolve to tackle poor attendance.
- The broad range of approaches that you have introduced to encourage good attendance have had a positive effect on the pupils' attitudes. The pupils know the importance of good attendance and rewards such as the Melbury Merits are having a positive effect on their motivation to attend.
- The improvement in attendance has been hard-won. It is due in no small part to the persistence and determination of the responsible staff. Nevertheless, securing consistently good attendance remains an important challenge for the school, particularly in relation to certain groups of pupils, such as those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- The early years is now well organised and provides better opportunities than previously for the children's learning. You have made sure that there are suitable resources to help the children learn better, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. The teachers are using the resources effectively and, as a result, the children are more focused on the intended learning than was the case previously.
- The children's achievement in the early years has improved. The impact is most notable currently in the children's understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), but there is still some way to go until many of them reach a good level of development overall.
- Throughout the school, the teachers devise lessons that stimulate the pupils' interest. For example, in one classroom, a display on a topic of South America contained many reusable sticky notes with questions written by the pupils, which showed considerable curiosity about the wider world in which they live.

- The teachers use questions thoughtfully to make the pupils think harder and to make sure that they have learned key things. For example, in one lesson, the teacher prompted the pupils systematically to use correct mathematical language to explain their answers. In another lesson, the teacher did not settle for the first answers provided by the pupils, even when the answers were quite lengthy and considered, but pressed them to explain themselves further and clarify things that they had not made entirely clear.
- The impact of the feedback that the teachers give to the pupils has improved significantly. The pupils explained to me how the marking system works and how the comments they receive from the teachers had helped them to improve their work. They said, and it was apparent from their books, that they get lots of opportunities to pick up on the teachers' comments to make corrections to mistakes and to answer additional and, sometimes, more challenging questions.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- recent improvements in attendance are built upon and attendance rises further, particularly in relation to groups with the lowest levels, such as disadvantaged pupils
- disadvantaged pupils in the early years and at Key Stage 1 make enough progress to reduce the difference between their achievement and that of other pupils.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with senior leaders, representatives of the governing body, members of staff in charge of the early years, the Key Stage 1 coordinator, the designated persons responsible for safeguarding and the learning mentor. I made a series of visits to lessons jointly with the headteacher, spending time in almost all classrooms at different times of the day. I examined examples of the pupils' work. I held a range of discussions with a wide variety of pupils, informally when observing breaktimes and during lessons and formally with a group of pupils. I observed the pupils' behaviour around the school, at breaktimes and during lessons. I met with parents at the beginning of the school day and looked at the views of parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I examined a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies, the latest

achievement and attendance information held by the school and records relating to the school's work to monitor the quality of teaching.