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Mr Andy Cassidy  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Cassidy

### **Short inspection of Mapperley Plains Primary and Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 March 2016, 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 May 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is vibrant and friendly. Pupils enjoy coming to school and parents are highly supportive of the leadership team. The sense of enjoyment coupled with high expectations is palpable across the school. Your determination to develop the whole child is successful. Pupils are polite, well mannered and eloquent. They have good values and express sound views about their responsibility towards the environment, their community and each other. With this culture and ethos, leaders have secured excellent outcomes for pupils in many areas across the school.

Since the last inspection, leaders have ensured that children make an excellent start to school life. Children make good progress in the early years and, at Key Stage 1, they go on to achieve highly. The school's track record of improvement in these key stages is exceptional. At the last inspection, some key areas of weakness were identified. These included the need for improvement in mathematics achievement across the school, especially for girls. Leaders acted swiftly on this area for improvement and have been successful. Mathematics outcomes in the school have improved year on year at all key stages. Boys and girls achieve equally well and, in some year groups, girls outperform boys. Girls' confidence in this subject has grown; they speak enthusiastically about the challenge and enjoyment they derive from their mathematics lessons.

Leaders have achieved these successes by ensuring that any identified weaknesses are given every attention across the school. The quality of teaching is improving. The appointment of new phase leaders is proving effective and contributing to increased levels of accountability across the school. However, there remain some key areas which need improvement. Progress in writing at Key Stage 2 in 2015 was significantly below average. Boys' achievement in this subject at this key stage also lags behind the girls' achievement, and boys' literacy skills are also weaker in the early years. Too few pupils achieve more than the progress expected in reading and writing. Leaders have clearly identified writing as an area for improvement in their self-evaluation and school improvement plan. The literacy leaders understand the key issues and they have introduced some effective strategies to improve boys' writing skills, which are already proving successful. For example, 'The Big Write' project has been adapted so that opportunities for writing are now more engaging; they follow creative cross-curricular themes, such as a focus on fantasy and magic. Boys' writing for this project was markedly better as a result of creative changes to the curriculum. The strategy of encouraging drafting and editing of writing is also improving the quality of pupils' written work. In the early years, boys' imaginations are stimulated by more hands-on and practical approaches, such as the 'lotions and potions' theme. Teachers noted that boys' interest in stories and mark-making on these themes increased.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements in the school are rigorously monitored. Policies have been developed from local authority guidance but also adapted by you to fit the particular context of the school. 'Safe recruitment' is practised well. You keep accurate records of concerns raised. Pupils are protected well. There are a number of ways pupils can let adults know if they are worried or upset about anything. One pupil said, 'if there's a problem we can always speak to a teacher ... teachers make you feel safe'. In addition, you have provided other ways pupils can let adults know if they are upset or worried like the 'buddy bus stop' in the playground and the 'bother box'. Staff are trained and receive child protection policies and guidance, although you have not established systems to confirm that staff have read and understood these. You have good working relationships with outside agencies to support the welfare of pupils in your care. The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme supports the school's safeguarding policies and practice. Pupils are taught how to keep safe in a number of ways such as how to keep safe on the internet and through fire safety and cycling proficiency training. Some pupils become junior road safety officers. Staff have also been trained to protect young people from being drawn into extremism and terrorism.

### **Inspection findings**

- Your self-evaluation accurately identifies the school's key weaknesses and strengths. The school improvement plan, which supports your evaluation, references ambitious key success criteria.
- You and governors have made astute recruitment decisions, especially at middle leadership level. The appointments of phase leaders have significantly strengthened leadership. Monitoring activities are carried out more robustly than before.

- The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body are new to post. They are committed and passionate about education. They have already made improvements to the organisation and effectiveness of governors' meetings, using their skills and knowledge from their own professions. They acknowledge that they need to undergo urgent training to understand how to carry out their work effectively. They are keen to continue to develop the level of challenge they provide for leaders in the school.
- The leadership of the early years is strong. Teachers and assistants have a thorough knowledge of the early learning goals and design learning opportunities carefully to engage and develop all children. Children follow adult instruction and share and cooperate with each other well. Children leave this stage of the school achieving or exceeding expected learning goals.
- The leadership of mathematics is strong. Pupils' success in this aspect of their education is evident in their work and their enthusiasm for the subject. One pupil summed up their mathematics experience as 'hard but fun at the same time'. Girls, in particular, have grown in confidence in this subject and achieve excellent outcomes.
- Teachers are increasingly knowledgeable and skilled at phonics teaching. This has contributed to successes in the phonics screening tests and improved reading skills across the school.
- The excellent progress made at Key Stage 1 in writing is not sustained at Key Stage 2, especially for boys. Progress information for current pupils suggests that their progress slows down in Year 3 but improves quickly later on. Strategies to accelerate progress in writing, especially for boys, are starting to make a difference. Literacy targets for individual pupils and bronze, silver and gold objectives in lessons have helped to raise expectations and improve progress towards age-related expectations.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to do well. Lessons are characterised by a calm and purposeful learning environment. Pupils' work is well presented and feedback by teachers is helpful. Pupils' attendance at school, after-school activities and clubs is high.
- The school has developed strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding among pupils. Pupils get on well with each other and differences are celebrated and are not barriers to friendships. One pupil said, 'it's like we don't notice anyone is different'. PSHE lessons and assemblies help pupils to think about social and moral issues, like stereotyping and bullying. Black History Month was celebrated by pupils with the help of the annual visit of a drama company.
- Parents speak highly of the school's inclusive ethos. The school's work to support and care for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is effective. Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding are provided with a range of support which includes small-group and booster sessions. Their progress is improving quickly and is approaching that of other pupils.
- Parents overwhelmingly support the leadership of the school. They value the way the school maintains good communication with them. More importantly, they praise the school's work to keep their children safe and its approaches which help their child enjoy school and make progress.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- whole-school strategies and expectations about writing, especially for boys, are embedded further
- training is undertaken for all governors to ensure they have the knowledge, understanding and confidence to hold leaders and managers fully to account.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Nottinghamshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Zarina Connolly  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met with a range of school leaders including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, two phase and subject leaders of English and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. I also spoke with two parents and considered 50 responses from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I spoke with a group of pupils formally and other pupils informally during lessons and at breakfast club. I visited classes in Key Stage 2 and evaluated pupils' work in their books. I scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, current assessment information and records and policies regarding safeguarding and the curriculum.