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Mr Michael Hoare  
Headteacher  
Mountfields Lodge School  
Epinal Way  
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Leicestershire  
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Dear Mr Hoare

### **Short inspection of Mountfields Lodge School**

Following my visit to the school on 6 July 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 March 2012.

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

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

Since the last inspection, most pupils have continued to make progress close to, or above, national levels in reading, writing and mathematics. You have identified that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is more variable and are taking appropriate action to boost the achievement of these pupils. Leaders have made changes to the curriculum that have helped to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in English and mathematics. You have organised the training that teachers need to implement these changes effectively. The results of teachers' regular assessments in pupils' books demonstrate that most pupils are making good progress in writing and mathematics across the school.

You have persisted in maintaining high standards of pupils' behaviour and conduct around the school. You see rapidly what is needed if ever standards fall. For example, when you identified that the behaviour of pupils was not what you expected it to be, especially at breaktimes, you carefully revised the school rules, reminded pupils and teachers of your high expectations and launched clearer systems for rewards and consequences. You make it clear that you expect all adults in the school to model high standards of conduct for pupils to follow. You have introduced suitable training for staff to ensure that the behaviour policy is used consistently. The school's 'ABC of good behaviour and learning' – standing for accept, behave and care – pervades all aspects of school life. Pupils have very

positive relationships with their teachers. They are welcoming and polite, greeting visitors confidently and warmly and are keen to share news of their achievements. They proudly wear badges awarded for positive behaviour.

Your evaluation of the strengths and areas needing improvement in the school is accurate. You have built on the strengths of the school and launched appropriate and effective strategies for the areas you saw needed to get better. You work productively with the Loughborough Primary Academy Partnership, comprising eight local primary schools, to make sure that your school's assessments are accurate, and teachers have improved their teaching by sharing good practice across the partnership.

After an unsettled period during this academic year, with some unexpected staff changes, the school is fully staffed for September 2016. With the establishment of new and experienced staff in your leadership team, you are in a strong position to continue the improvements you have made since your appointment.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The single central record shows that the school carries out all the required checks of staff. You make sure that all staff receive essential up-to-date safeguarding training, and organise training promptly for any who join at different times of the year.

The school keeps detailed case studies of pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. These records show that you are vigilant and persistent in your work with outside agencies in providing pupils with the support they need.

The pupil mentor carries out important work with individual pupils. Pupils become more settled and feel more positive about coming to school because of their work with her, so their attendance and work improves. She makes sure that potentially vulnerable pupils have a network of adults to go to if they want help with anything. She provides a valuable link with pupils' homes, giving help where and when it is most needed. This is exemplified by her availability through the school holidays via a dedicated phone line. Families appreciate very much the support, advice and reassurance she provides.

Pupils say they feel very safe in all parts of the school. They are well versed in how to recognise risks and keep safe as a consequence of opportunities through the curriculum and extra-curricular events. They are alert to the dangers of accessing inappropriate material on the internet because of clear guidance from their teachers in lessons. Pupils are confident that they have someone to talk to if they have any worries.

### **Inspection findings**

- You took up your post as headteacher in September 2012. You oversaw successfully the conversion to academy status in December 2012. You have developed strong links within the Loughborough Primary Academy

Partnership. The partnership enables you to work closely with other headteachers, for example in moderating assessments of pupils' work, reviewing the curriculum and developing the skills of senior leaders in your school.

- In recent years, pupils have not achieved as well in writing as they have in mathematics and reading. You judge that this is because some pupils have not experienced a sufficiently broad range of stories to inspire their ideas and motivate them to write well. You and your staff have adapted the curriculum accordingly, successfully boosting pupils' imaginations and their interest in writing. As a result of the changes made, pupils now demonstrate greater resilience and concentration when working on extended pieces of writing than before. They are also able to identify, more accurately, how to improve their written work. Improvements to the curriculum have been accompanied by better teaching because of the training that staff have received. Careful monitoring by subject coordinators and other leaders has enabled them to identify astutely where further refinements have been needed. For example, they have adapted teaching for the older year groups so that more attention is given to pupils' use of grammar, punctuation and spelling. These changes have secured improvements to the quality of pupils' writing but have not been in place long enough to enable all pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
- You have also secured improvements to the quality of mathematics teaching. Teachers have raised their expectations and have become increasingly skilled at providing good levels of challenge in lessons and in making good use of questioning to probe and extend pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils are getting better at explaining their reasoning and using technical terms in their answers. Pupils say that they now enjoy mathematics more, speaking enthusiastically about the activities provided to help them learn their times tables, for example. You recognise that these strong features of mathematics teaching are not yet seen all classes.
- Teachers' application of the school's marking and feedback policy has a clear impact in helping pupils to make progress, especially when it is applied consistently. Pupils know what they need to do to improve their work because of the effective feedback and support their teachers have given them. Teachers give them opportunities to make corrections and extend their answers, during 'polish time' or 'red pen time' in different classes.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not consistently make progress at rates similar to others in the school. Governors have completed a comprehensive review of the impact of support given to these pupils. They have identified, rightly, that a range of additional support has provided a much-needed boost to some pupils' self-esteem and resilience. Leaders and governors have given careful thought to how the support provided can improve these pupils' rates of progress to ensure they achieve as well as their peers. You now have clear expectations that teachers take into account the needs of specific groups of pupils in planning learning activities and ensure that they develop the essential expertise to do this effectively. Teachers now routinely use profile sheets to inform their planning, so they are clear about the support each pupil needs

to make good progress. You have revised thoroughly the ways in which teachers and teaching assistants work together and how pupils are grouped in lessons. As a result, from September 2016, the good practice seen in small-group teaching is being integrated into all lessons, including in the early years.

- The coordinator and the mentor for pupils who speak English as an additional language have both completed valuable work to improve communication with families of those pupils newly arriving at the school, sometimes speaking no English. 'Survival work' is used quickly to boost the vocabulary, comprehension skills and grammar of pupils who arrive with little or no English so that they can engage in learning and consequently make good progress from their various starting points.
- You have forged strong links with parents and provide them with regular and helpful information to support their child's learning at home. These communications start at the earliest opportunity when the early years staff meet parents before their child starts at school, sometimes making a home visit, to ensure children are happy, confident and ready for school.
- The proportion of children that achieve a good level of development in the early years is higher than the national average. Leaders have successfully applied whole-school strategies which have led to improvements in the standard of writing in the early years. Children respond very well to encouragement from their teachers to write independently. One child was delighted to add a brick to a tower indicating that she had completed a piece of writing successfully. Children are stimulated by the attractive environment in the early years, with its variety of interesting resources that inspire their imagination and motivate them to develop a wide range of skills. One child enthusiastically described her observations of minibeasts – developing her number skills.
- Leaders, including governors, make frequent and very productive use of pupils' ideas and views. For example, they used their discussions with pupils to inform their decision to revise the school's rules. This means that pupils now have a clear understanding of, and respect for, what is expected of them. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the bronze, silver and gold pin badges earned in support of the school's code of conduct and received at achievement assemblies. They are motivated to work harder and receive counters in the house system. Leaders also listen to the views of the school council. They have changed the lunch menu after pupils requested healthier options.
- The school has taken purposeful steps to improve pupils' behaviour, especially out of lessons, at break and lunchtimes. There has been worthwhile training for all staff in the best ways to de-escalate incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils report that serious incidents of poor behaviour are rare. They say that the new systems and rules have led to pupils' behaviour getting better.
- Pupils' views about behaviour in the school are supported by the records kept by leaders. Leaders follow up promptly any poor behaviour in lessons. Pupils who misbehave attend 'thinking time' sessions at lunchtime, when they reflect on the impact of their actions on others in conversations with a

senior leader. This practice has led to reductions in incidents of poor behaviour, and has helped staff to identify pupils who need additional support to improve their conduct, including when taught by temporary staff. The large majority of parents who have completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree the school manages pupils' behaviour well.

- Overall, levels of pupils' attendance continue to improve and are above the national average. However, the attendance of some disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than other pupils. The school is aware of the very specific and individual circumstances that are the basis to the poor attendance of these pupils. Leaders judge carefully the approach needed and work successfully with parents, often involving the pupil mentor, so the frequency of absences decreases.
- You have restructured the leadership team and provided relevant training opportunities for subject leaders to strengthen their roles in the monitoring of teaching. Staff know that they are accountable for the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility.
- Governors have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement of the school. They have undertaken training and recruited new governors wisely to make sure that they can fulfil their responsibilities and remain up to date with the evolving priorities of the school.
- The school's website is compliant with the Department for Education requirements and includes helpful additional information for parents to help them understand the school's assessment systems.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- best practice in teaching is shared across the school so that the quality of questioning and levels of challenge for pupils are consistently high, particularly in mathematics
- they continue to monitor closely the impact of the recent and planned changes to provision for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that they are making enough difference.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Carter-Fraser  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection I held several meetings with you and the deputy headteacher, one of which was also attended by the pupil mentor and leader with responsibility for monitoring behaviour. I also met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, a community governor and the chair of the finance committee. I toured the school accompanied by you and held informal conversations with staff and pupils. I met formally with a group of pupils from all year groups. I looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, achievement information and questionnaires completed by parents.