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Mrs L Azemia
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Azemia

Short inspection of Mornington Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 October 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 September 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Yours is a happy and a thriving school. Pupils enjoy coming here and they learn well, because of the calm and purposeful ethos that you and other leaders have created. The 'Mornington values' that you have established underpin the school's ethos. These were very much in evidence during my visit, not least in the pupils' eagerness to make a positive contribution to their learning and to their school. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and play an important role in helping you to improve the school, for example through the school council. They say that they are helped to appreciate and respect people from backgrounds different from their own. The celebration of the diverse cultures that make up your school makes a significant contribution to the school's positive, vibrant and welcoming culture.

You have taken effective action to address the priorities identified in the previous inspection. You have successfully raised achievement at key stage 2, where pupils now reach levels of attainment that are typically above national averages. They perform particularly well in reading and mathematics. You have taken steps to improve the achievement of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.

Under the previous assessment system, the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher levels in English and mathematics showed a year-on-year increase following the previous inspection. Provisional data suggests that the proportion of pupils working at a greater depth in 2016 in reading, writing and mathematics will be above national averages.

You have taken steps to improve boys' enjoyment of writing. You devised an action plan to address the key issues and made changes to the curriculum. These measures have had some success, particularly at key stage 2. In our joint visits to classes, we saw evidence of boys motivated by their writing tasks and being challenged by their writing. Boys on the playground told me, unprompted, how much they 'love writing'. However, boys still lag behind girls in their knowledge and application of grammar, punctuation and spelling. The gap between boys' and girls' achievements in writing remains too wide at key stage 1.

In 2016, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development in the early years rose significantly, and a few children exceeded this measure. Staff use the learning journals well to keep parents informed of their children's achievements and in the past year, you and your team have made tremendous efforts to create a wonderful outdoor space. The reading area in the 'treehouse' makes for a lovely reading den. Staff ensure that when appropriate, children are successfully guided to learning activities rather than play when using the outdoor area. Leaders track very carefully the progress that different groups of children make and take steps to intervene when children are not making enough progress. For example, leaders have identified that accelerating the rate at which children who speak English as an additional language acquire language skills is a key priority. You agree with my finding that the most able children in the early years need that extra push to get more of them off to a flying start.

You have successfully created a culture of reading across the school. I observed that at lunchtime, the library hummed with activity, and one boy told me he was finding it difficult to choose a book 'because there's just too much choice!' Pupils who read to me were keen to share their reading preferences. Almost all of them were confident, fluent readers who could use their phonic knowledge to decode unfamiliar words. Measures to improve achievement in reading have met with success across the school. Attainment in the phonics screening check has risen and is now closer to the national average. For the first time, boys outperformed girls in this measure in 2016. Those pupils who do not pass the check first time, for example those who speak English as an additional language, quickly catch up with their peers. The achievement of these pupils at key stage 2 shows that they make accelerated progress from their starting points, in some cases outperforming their peers.

Your self-evaluation indicated that you had a slightly over-generous view of the school's effectiveness. However, your monitoring records show that you have a precise and accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching in your school.

These monitoring records indicate the precise actions that are needed to improve teaching and you ensure that these actions are followed up and reviewed. You also ensure that staff understand any changes that you need to make and that change is introduced carefully. For example, you have successfully managed the change to a new assessment system.

Your development plans are testament to your ambition for continued improvement. You are reflective and forward looking, using your experiences of what has worked, as well as what has not, to plan future developments. The school's effective evaluation of the impact of the use of the pupil premium is just one example of this approach working well.

You make a valuable contribution to the partnership of schools that your school is part of, for example by providing teacher training and development. Teachers and leaders from the partnership have opportunities to meet and share good practice. You and other leaders in the partnership are wisely considering how you might introduce a greater degree of accountability to the collaboration.

Staff are supportive of your leadership, because they know that you are committed to their professional development. For example, you are a member of a local teacher training alliance and have successfully recruited and retained trainee teachers through this route. These teachers are now contributing to the overall good quality of teaching in your school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff know the pupils and their families well, and keep a close eye on their well-being. You are alert to the changes that may indicate a concern. You keep careful, detailed records of all concerns that are reported to you, no matter how insignificant they may seem, and ensure that you monitor and review these records at regular intervals. You and other leaders ensure that you keep safeguarding concerns at the top of the school's priorities, for example through regular briefing sessions with staff and appropriate information sharing. You were able to show me examples of effective work with other agencies to keep pupils safe and well. You have a good understanding of the local authority's threshold for referrals and have put in place appropriate steps to ensure that pupils and families get the help they need before a referral becomes necessary. For example, you make best use of the school's on-site counsellor who, in addition to being a listening ear for pupils, has provided staff with training on a number of issues. It is clear that you are committed to developing supportive, professional relationships with parents. This has resulted in parents sharing their concerns and working with you to support their children. All the pupils I spoke with feel safe in school and trust their teachers to respond to their concerns.

Inspection findings

- The school has a strong sense of purpose. Senior leaders are committed to developing staff and pupils to reach their full potential. Leaders keep a close eye on the progress pupils make and take swift action to remedy any weaknesses.
- Unconfirmed data for the 2016 key stage 2 tests shows that the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard and achieving the higher standard are above the national average for reading, writing, mathematics, and grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Pupils' achievement at key stage 1 is typically in line with national averages. Leaders accept that there is more to do to improve their attainment in writing, in particular, and to ensure that boys do as well as girls in this subject.
- Disadvantaged pupils make the same rates of progress as their peers. Leaders carefully evaluate the impact of actions to raise their achievement and amend these as necessary.
- Leaders have a very clear understanding of strengths and areas for development within their subjects. Monitoring and evaluation records pinpoint the precise actions needed to improve teaching, learning and assessment.
- Expectations for pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation are not consistently high in all subjects. Writing tasks in topic work are not always sufficiently challenging. Pupils have too few opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills in mathematics and to apply their mathematical reasoning across a range of situations.
- In the early years, the most able children do not have enough opportunities to tackle challenging tasks.
- Attendance has been consistently above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school rose in the previous year, but remains below average. Leaders are reviewing their strategies for discouraging parents from taking children out of school in term time.
- Classrooms, corridors and other learning areas are well presented. The values of this school shine through in the way pupils speak with one another and their attitudes to learning. Leaders ensure that pupils have a good appreciation of the cultures and faiths both in the school and beyond.
- The school's continued good performance means that there is very little support from the local authority. However, leaders and staff benefit from the close links they have formed with local schools.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- expectations for pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation are consistently high in all subjects, and that pupils are more regularly challenged by written tasks in their topic work
- they reduce any remaining gaps between the achievement of boys and girls in writing at key stage 1

- pupils have more opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills in mathematics and to apply their mathematical reasoning across a range of situations
- there are more opportunities for the most able children in the early years to tackle challenging tasks.

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

Yours sincerely

Deirdre Duignan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we jointly visited classes in Years 5 and 6, Years 3 and 4, Years 1 and 2 and the early years. I met with you and other leaders to discuss the school's progress since the previous inspection and its current strengths and areas for development. I met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I toured the school at lunchtime and spoke with pupils. We looked at a selection of pupils' work in class and I listened to pupils from across the ability range reading. I spoke with parents as they collected their children from school. A range of documentation was reviewed, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, minutes of meetings of the governing body and the most recent information regarding pupils' outcomes. I scrutinised the records of checks on the suitability of staff and records relating to safeguarding. I checked the school's website, which meets requirements on the publication of specified information.

During the inspection I considered:

- to what extent the school had successfully addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection
- whether pupils make enough progress in key stage 1, and what leaders have done to raise attainment in phonics
- whether leaders had improved the achievement of pupils in the early years
- the actions of leaders to ensure that all pupils, especially the disadvantaged, are making accelerated progress in mathematics.