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19 December 2016

Miss Phillippa Jones  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Jones

### **Short inspection of Mitton Manor Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 December 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in March 2013.

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

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

Since taking up your appointment in October 2015, you have driven improvement at a fast pace. Together with the governors, you have built a strong and committed staff team who share your high aspirations, ambition and vision to secure the very best education for every pupil. Staff feel valued and well supported by you and the governing body. As a result, standards in English and mathematics are rising. Pupils' outcomes across the school have improved. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and parents trust you to provide a safe and a high-quality education for their children. The school's capacity for further improvement is strong.

All leaders have an accurate and in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. You continually reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of the approaches you have brought in to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. In addition, new subject leaders are stepping up to their roles with your support. They benefit from high-quality coaching and mentoring. This support enables them to check standards in their subjects and ensure that pupils make good progress. Work in books confirms that pupils complete pieces of high-quality writing in their English books and across a range of subjects. Nonetheless, you continue to ensure that pupils have sufficient challenge to enable them to reach the highest standards, particularly in mathematics.

Pupils learn in a vibrant and welcoming learning environment. Their completed work is celebrated in displays in every classroom. These displays confirm the high standards that pupils now reach in subjects across the curriculum. In addition, they benefit from a wealth of information in classrooms to support their learning in English and mathematics. This is helping pupils to become independent learners by providing prompts that they can use to review their own work. In addition, you and your leaders frequently check that the quality of teaching enables pupils to learn effectively. You are now improving leaders' monitoring systems so that there is even greater precision in evaluating the attainment and progress of individuals and specific groups of pupils. However, pupils leave the school proud to have been part of the Mitton Manor TEAM, where pupils 'Try, Enjoy, Achieve and Move forward'. Pupils are very well prepared for their secondary school education.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively and are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders assiduously follow up concerns and work effectively with families to provide the support pupils need to be successful learners. You provide high-quality training for all staff so that they know how to recognise and respond to any indications of risk or harm. This includes training on aspects of safeguarding such as recognising the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. This strong safeguarding culture is evident in the school's recruitment practices. Senior leaders and governors have been appropriately trained. The school's single, central record of safeguarding checks on all staff, governors and regular visitors is accurate and rigorously maintained.

Pupils say they feel safe at the school. You ensure that all pupils receive information and guidance to enable them to keep safe online. Displays in classrooms reinforce key messages to help pupils understand how to keep safe when using the internet. Pupils say that on the rare occasions that they feel upset or bullied, they are confident in telling an adult and know that any issue will be quickly resolved. As a result, pupils are safe and secure at Mitton Manor. Consequently, pupils arrive at school on time and are eager to learn. Attendance is good.

### **Inspection findings**

- On taking up your appointment, you identified the need to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to improve standards and pupils' progress further. You swiftly established new, effective systems to regularly check pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The rigour of your approach is driving improvement at a fast pace. Teachers are now confident and accurate in their assessment of pupils' learning. They know and understand the expectations for pupils' outcomes in each age group. Teachers use this information to plan tasks that precisely meet the needs of their pupils. In addition, staff quickly identify pupils at risk of falling behind and implement interventions to support their progress. The progress of each pupil is carefully tracked and appropriate support is provided. As a result, the school's assessment

information and the work in pupils' books confirm that pupils are now making faster progress across the school, in a wide range of subjects.

- Since the previous inspection, you have focused relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching. In particular, the new approaches you have brought in to strengthen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in mathematics are helping pupils to make faster progress. Teachers use questioning well to deepen and extend pupils' learning. For example, during the inspection, a group of girls explained their thinking and developed their understanding of multiplication when solving problems. Teachers encourage pupils to 'have a go'. In response, pupils apply their skills to demonstrate what they can do, know and understand. The school's new approach to mathematics has resulted in raised standards and more rapid progress. Nonetheless, teachers do not always challenge pupils sufficiently. This includes the most able pupils, who need to be challenged to reach the highest standards. Leaders regularly monitor the quality of teachers' work. However, records of this monitoring demonstrate that leaders are not focusing on the impact of teaching on the progress of specific groups of pupils and individuals.
- You have taken swift and effective action to improve the teaching of reading across the school. In particular, you have strengthened the teaching of phonics in the early years, and Years 1 and 2. Teachers and teaching assistants have strong subject knowledge. They consistently deliver high-quality daily lessons which build pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds sequentially. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 is rising steadily and is above the national average. Booster sessions successfully support those who need further support. This support continues into Years 2 and 3, when needed, so that pupils make the gains in their learning to help them catch up. The pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6 who read to the inspector, including boys and the most able disadvantaged, used their phonic knowledge well to read unknown words. The differences in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are diminishing. The most able pupils read with fluency, accuracy and enjoyment. They demonstrated an impressive knowledge of a range of authors and ably discussed fiction books they have recently read.
- The teaching of writing is a strength of the school. Teachers explicitly teach the skills pupils need to be effective writers. Leaders have taken appropriate actions to improve grammar, spelling and punctuation. As a result, an increasing proportion of pupils make good progress and reach the higher standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils learn to write to 'inform, entertain and persuade' to engage the reader. They use their individual writing targets to check their own learning and improve their work. Teachers encourage the most able pupils to reach the more challenging targets to extend their learning and skills. Work in pupils' 'topic books' confirms that they learn how to write high-quality texts in a range of subjects. For example, pupils demonstrated, through their extended writing in geography and science, what they had learned about the Olympic Games in Brazil. This extended writing for other subjects is also helping the boys to engage in learning and to make faster progress in writing. In addition, teachers ensure that pupils who need to catch up in Years 1 and 2, receive strong support to build their skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling. As a

result, pupils make good progress from their starting points.

- Your work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is strong. The school's values underpin all aspects of the school. Pupils take on leadership roles including those of prefects and sports leaders. They learn to be responsible, kind and considerate to others. The introduction of topics such as 'tribes' and 'tumbling through time' have increased pupils' understanding of other cultures and traditions. Exceptional displays of pupils' high-quality artwork and writing are carefully presented around the school. The vast majority of parents are pleased with the education the school provides for their children. 'There is a lot of sunshine in the school' was a typical comment made to the inspector. Pupils were heard singing with enthusiasm during the inspection, in one of the many after-school activities organised to broaden pupils' experience and interests. As a result, pupils show respect to one another, are polite and courteous and enjoy school.
- The intervention manager works successfully with teachers, pupils and their families, to provide effective support for those with identified social, emotional or learning needs. Parents appreciate this care and support. They say that the personalised and precise short-term targets set by staff enable their children to make faster progress in both their academic and personal development.
- Governors share the leaders' ambitions to continue to improve the school. You provide frequent and detailed reports to governors, analysing the school's performance. Nonetheless, governors visit the school regularly to support leaders but also to appropriately challenge them. They seek further clarification about leaders' actions to secure improvement. This rigorous approach is having a positive impact, resulting in the school's rapid improvement. Governors tackle any underperformance immediately. They do not shy away from taking the decisions needed to ensure that the quality of teaching continues to improve. In addition, they are well informed about the progress and achievement of groups of pupils, including the disadvantaged. For example, during the inspection, governors provided an in-depth analysis of the performance of groups of pupils. They work closely with subject leaders to ensure that any underperformance is tackled effectively. Consequently, effective and strategic governance has been instrumental in improving the school's performance quickly.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils have the opportunity to move on to more challenging work quickly in mathematics so that they develop greater depth of understanding
- senior leaders continue to develop the skills of subject leaders, who are new to their roles, to enable them to support the school's improvement further
- leaders' monitoring focuses precisely on the impact of teachers' actions on the progress of individuals and groups.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Gloucestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Leahy  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, the inspector met with you, senior leaders and subject leaders. Meetings were held with the chair of the governing body and members of the governing body. The inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day and observed pupils arriving at school. She visited lessons, accompanied by you, to observe teaching and learning in all classes. In addition, the inspector scrutinised pupils' work and discussed their progress and achievement with school leaders. The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, minutes of meetings, information on the progress of pupils and documentation relating to safeguarding, including the single, central record. The inspector spoke to pupils informally during the inspection, including at lunchtime. She took account of 20 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire, further responses to the free-text service and correspondence received during the inspection. The inspection also took account of 56 responses from pupils and 24 responses to the staff questionnaire. In addition, the inspector spoke with the previous executive headteacher by telephone, who provided support to the school following the school's conversion to academy status.

In particular, the inspection focused on the following key lines of enquiry.

- How effective is the quality of teaching of English for boys and mathematics for girls? How effectively are the most able pupils challenged to learn effectively and reach the higher standards?
- How effective is the quality of teaching and the interventions for less able pupils in key stage 1?
- How well does the school accelerate and improve reading for those pupils who did not reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check?
- How well do governors carry out their roles and responsibilities? Are the school's arrangements for safeguarding robust and implemented effectively? Is there a culture of effective safeguarding practice at the school to ensure that pupils are safe and secure?