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Mr Jim Nicholson
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Nicholson

Short inspection of Mellor Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 January 2017, 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 April 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Mellor Primary is a happy school where pupils are taught well and develop as confident and self-assured children. This is because of the belief and trust that leaders have in pupils to realise the school's motto to 'make people shine'.

As headteacher, you lead an energetic and enthusiastic team of staff who want to do their best for the pupils. The training and support staff receive are developing them all the time and the pupils are benefiting. This can be seen in the strategies you have adopted to ensure that mathematics is taught well and that pupils can solve problems with confidence.

Since the last inspection, you have demonstrated the ability and tenacity to embrace and overcome challenges. The areas for improvement identified in that inspection have been addressed. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is much improved and the most able pupils make better progress than pupils with the same starting points nationally.

You have rightly identified that the progress that pupils make in reading is not fast enough and is overshadowed by the outstanding progress that they make in writing. This is especially so for boys. Already you have addressed this and new strategies are being embedded. However, as we discussed, you have a beautiful library at the

heart of the school that is not being used in the way it should. Pupils told me that they rarely use the library.

The school is respected in the local community and, under your leadership, it has grown in size and site. Your school building and provision are the envy of many, but you are not using these resources to full effect. Nonetheless, you provide pupils with experiences that will form and shape them in years to come. For example, you join forces with the Halle Orchestra and the Royal Ballet Society, and annually participate in the Shakespeare festival at the Lowry. More recently, Professor Brian Cox came to open your outdoor learning provision.

You acknowledge that you could involve parents more in their children's learning from the early years onwards. Parents valued the recent workshops your staff led on mathematics and reading, but I saw limited examples of parental involvement in the early years. You recognise the positive contributions parents can make to their children's learning when involved from the very beginning.

Governors are very supportive of you and have every confidence in your ability to realise their vision for the school. Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and accept there is still some way to go until Mellor Primary is the best it can be. There is a humility and openness to recognising and learning from excellence. Following last year's key stage 1 results, which were not as strong as usual, governors asked for additional training and support to have a more secure understanding of progress. Subsequent minutes of the governing body meetings show that governors have adopted a critical eye when discussing pupils' progress.

Governors have effectively managed the challenges you face as a school within a single academy trust. Governors have ensured financial stability and are always seeking ways to secure the school's future in the years ahead. You and the governors accept that the manner in which you analyse and report on the impact of the spending of the pupil premium funding to parents is not as rigorous as it should be.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils told me that they feel very safe at school and I saw how much of a priority keeping children safe is to you and the staff. Your effective weekly safeguarding briefings to staff are a way in which you keep them informed of the many aspects about which schools need to be alert and attentive. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and records are of a high quality.

While keeping the understanding of the staff up to date, you also provide support and information for parents. The page on your website, 'Safeguarding in a Digital Age', is particularly useful. A number of parents told me that they liked the 'safeguarding corner' in your fortnightly newsletter.

Inspection findings

- The achievement of pupils at key stage 2 in writing is outstanding. In mathematics it is good. Pupils' achievement in reading lags behind and the difference between girls and boys is notable. Leaders are aware of this and specific strategies are in place. The progress of current pupils in these groups is good and the most able pupils continue to learn well and achieve better than their peers nationally.
- In 2016, at key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was not as high as usual. Leaders know why this was the case and demonstrated that the progress of pupils currently in key stage 1 is good.
- The curricular provision is effective and allows pupils to make good progress. The opportunities that the pupils have at this school are life-forming and they experience exciting things. As discussed earlier, the excellent resources available are not being used to full effect.
- Although the proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is very small, the allocation of the pupil premium funding and its impact on these pupils are unclear.
- Parents' involvement in their children's learning is limited, especially in the early years. The communication with home tends to be at formal points throughout the year and, therefore, the rapid progress children make in their development is not being as fully relayed to parents as it could be.
- The teaching in mathematics is strong, and you have introduced a number of strategies and training for staff to enhance this further. The teaching reflects the changes in the mathematics curriculum and incorporates current research and insights into good practice. The impact of this is evident, especially in the younger year groups.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- support parents to become more involved in their children's learning, especially in the early years
- utilise the many facilities you have, especially the library, to develop and extend pupils' learning
- analyse and report on the allocation and impact of the pupil premium funding with greater accuracy and rigour.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection I met with you, senior leaders and four members of the governing body and I was able to speak to your school improvement partner. With you, I conducted a learning walk and visited all classes and had the opportunity to speak with pupils and see their work. I also listened to a number of pupils read. As part of the inspection, I checked that all the welfare requirements were being met in your Nursery provision. I met with a group of pupils throughout the day, spoke with a number of parents at the school gates and took account of 74 free text comments. There were 130 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents. There were no responses to the online staff questionnaire and no responses to the pupils' questionnaire. I scrutinised your assessment information, school improvement planning, the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices.