

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs Catriona Williamson  
Mere School  
Springfield Road  
Mere  
Warminster  
Wiltshire  
BA12 6EW

Dear Mrs Williamson

### **Short inspection of Mere School**

Following my visit to the school on 16 March 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 November 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, you have ensured that the school remains a calm and purposeful place for pupils to learn. Routines for behaviour and learning are well established and, as a result, pupils are progressing well. Your inclusive attitude to learning has ensured that the many pupils who enter school mid-year integrate well and settle quickly so their progress is not impeded.

You have focused on improving pupils' knowledge and understanding in the full range of subjects. The skills learned in the core subjects, especially writing, underpin the accomplishment in these areas. Leaders and managers monitor different subjects closely and this helps the planning and accountability for achievement.

You have inculcated a positive team spirit among the staff with the common goal of improving the school continually. Teacher development is at the forefront of this and takes place formally as well as through more informal sharing of good practice. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and provide very effective intervention and support for pupils. Consequently, teaching is strong and pupils are engaged in their activities and enthusiastic about what they do.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

You encourage a culture where pupils are safe and secure in the school at all times. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and the safeguarding policy is up to date. You are vigilant in working with pupils, parents and external agencies to monitor and support the most vulnerable pupils. Staff are trained in how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, and from the influence of radical or extreme views.

## **Inspection findings**

- An area that was investigated to ascertain that the school remains good was the improvements made in writing in key stages 1 and 2. You have appointed a new leader for English who has provided both passion and expertise in response to the necessary changes in the school curriculum. The English leader has developed a system that is both practical yet engaging which has enhanced pupils' skills and enriched their vocabulary. With his guidance, teachers, too, are more proficient in the technical aspects of the writing curriculum, which helps pupils' confidence in what they are writing and why. You are in a position, now, to further refine the requirements so that more pupils succeed, especially in writing at greater depth.
- Achievement in mathematics is secure because teachers and teaching assistants rectify the errors that pupils make immediately. You and the English leader are working with teachers to implement this practice in English, too, so that pupils make progress more rapidly.
- The second area investigated was outcomes in key stage 1, which were below expectations in 2016, especially for boys. You have ensured that the high expectations that exist in the rest of the school are embedded for these pupils in Year 3. The pupils who joined mid-year in 2016 are now making good progress because the needs of individual pupils are met well. The effective practices that happen in mathematics are undertaken with this year group; pupils' work is scrutinised immediately so that when misconceptions occur, prompt intervention by teachers and teaching assistants corrects them. This is enabling pupils to achieve success more quickly and they are motivated to do better. Year 3 is on course for good results in key stage 2.
- Attendance was the third area of investigation. You are very aware that the attendance of some pupils has been too low and have worked hard to resolve the issue. Close working with parents and the adoption of a range of initiatives is improving pupils' attendance overall. It is now in line with the national average. This approach has also supported the improved attendance of the disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many are attending school full time when previously their attendance used to be significantly below the national average. Parents are fully informed about the implications of taking pupils out of school during term time.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers improve pupils' writing at greater depth to achieve the higher standard
- interventions in English follow the practice used in the teaching of mathematics so that pupils' misconceptions are corrected more quickly.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, middle leaders, governors, staff and pupils. I visited lessons for all classes in the school. I looked at the quality of the work in pupils' exercise books. I considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding. I took into account 62 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and 56 comments written by parents.