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Ms Sara Street
Headteacher
Mickley Infant School
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Dear Ms Street

Short inspection of Mickley Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 4 April 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your team have created a warm and friendly school where pupils are well cared for and enjoy their learning. As a result, pupils are happy in school and parents are supportive. Parents speak highly of the work you have done to improve Mickley Infant School.

You ensure that pupils are taught to respect adults and each other. As a result, pupils behave well. They know that staff are there to help them with their learning and are confident that they can talk to staff if they experience any problems. The work teachers have done to educate pupils about bullying has resulted in very few incidences of bullying or unkind behaviour. Consequently, pupils are caring and demonstrate compassion for others. For example, pupils are welcoming to new pupils and were able to explain to me how they had helped a pupil who spoke little English to integrate into the school.

You have clear and accurate plans for school improvement. You share your plans and your vision for the school with staff, governors and parents. Your website is up to date and is a useful source of information for parents and visitors. You provide appropriate support and guidance to help your staff and governors to understand the priorities for the school. Your senior teacher feels trusted and enabled to lead. You and the staff work well as a team to ensure that the plans you make are raising standards for the pupils in your school. As a result, pupils make good progress from

their different starting points.

You have high expectations for your school and for the standards you expect your pupils to achieve. You carefully track the attainment and progress of all pupils. As a result, teachers know what pupils need to learn next in order to make progress. Additional support is given to pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, when necessary. You have developed the curriculum and teachers have had effective training, linked to your school priorities, to ensure that standards remain good and are improving.

At the last inspection, the inspector recognised the good progress that your pupils achieve. In addition, the inspector commented on how well pupils behaved and how much they enjoyed their learning. These strengths have been maintained. The inspector asked you to ensure that pupils spend more time explaining their thinking in mathematics. During our walk around the school together to look at pupils' learning, we observed pupils in key stage 1 confidently talking about their learning in mathematics. They explained how they had worked through calculations to arrive at their answers. In Reception, we listened to children making mathematical predictions and giving reasoned explanations in response to the teacher's questions.

You recognise the strengths of your school and have written detailed action plans to address the areas for improvement. You have focused on improving the provision in the early years to ensure that children are provided with opportunities to develop their learning in mathematics. As a result, the environment is stimulating and provides children with interesting learning activities. However, you are aware that standards in mathematics in the early years are not as high as they could be. You have taken steps to raise standards for boys across the school and your work to introduce topics that enthuse and engage boys has been successful. Although the attainment gap between girls and boys is closing, especially in Years 1 and 2, you have identified that there is more to be done to ensure that all pupils reach similar standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1.

Pupils' attendance is in line with national figures for pupils overall. However, published data indicate that, for some groups of pupils, attendance is not as high as it should be. Pupil numbers in the groups with low attendance were small and you were able to explain why their attendance was low. You have a good understanding of the families in your community and work well with external agencies to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged by low attendance.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and you and your senior teacher lead very well on safeguarding. Staff and governors receive frequent and up-to-date training. They know what to do to keep pupils safe. You work actively with external agencies and refer your concerns in a timely manner. You are aware of your responsibility to follow up and escalate your concerns if necessary.

Pupils are safe and happy in school. Pupils are confident that bullying is rare and that staff deal with this well. Pupils know how to use the internet safely and to report problems to an adult. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and could explain how to cross the road safely.

Inspection findings

- You know your school well and ensure that you clearly communicate school priorities to staff and governors. Action to tackle weaknesses is already under way and your plans for improvement are accurate and appropriately focused on raising attainment.
- Teachers are given clear and accurate advice to help them improve. They work well together to share good practice. For example, staff have a 'Shout Out' board in the staff room where they post their suggestions for school improvement. The school is a member of a teaching school alliance and has a good relationship with its local cluster of schools. Teachers work well with their school cluster to check that their assessments of pupils' progress are accurate. They do this at least three times a year. In addition, the school works closely with its associate school improvement adviser, who has provided support and guidance to the headteacher and governors.
- The governing body has a good understanding of the school's performance. Governors provide you with effective support and challenge and are committed to improving the school further.
- You use the pupil premium funding and funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively to ensure that these pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' books in key stage 1 and children's learning journeys in Reception demonstrate that the majority of pupils make good progress from their different starting points. Where pupils make less than good progress, additional support is in place to help these pupils to catch up.
- Your plans for improvement focus on supporting boys' achievement across subjects and across the school. There is a much higher proportion of boys in the school than girls, and boys attain less well than girls do. You have introduced an outdoor learning programme, bought new books for your library and teachers plan lessons based on topics that follow the interests of boys at the school. This has positively affected boys' learning and enthusiasm for school. You and your governors spoke of 'getting the balance right' between planning lessons to motivate the boys without negatively affecting the achievement of the girls.
- The attainment of children in mathematics by the end of Reception in 2016 was below the national average, and this has been a pattern over time. You have identified this and your early years leader has put plans in place to develop the provision across the early years to provide a rich learning environment for mathematics. For example, the boys in particular have enjoyed developing their mathematical language through their play in the 'mud kitchen'. The early years leader has changed the way staff teach mathematics and has introduced an additional daily mathematics session. These changes are proving effective in

raising standards in mathematics.

- Attendance, which was in line with the national average overall, was in the lowest 10% for pupils not classed as disadvantaged, girls and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Current attendance figures for these pupils are at least in line with national averages. However, leaders, including governors, have recognised the importance of strengthening their parent partnership work and have plans in place to do this.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils across the early years receive regular opportunities to develop their learning in mathematics to ensure that standards, by the end of Reception, are in line with, or above, national standards
- all teachers raise their expectations of what pupils can do, so that boys' and girls' attainment is similar in all subjects and in each year group.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Richardson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you and the majority of your staff. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and I met with a group of pupils. I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also spoke with your local authority link adviser. We visited classrooms together and we looked at a range of pupils' work from key stage 1 and the early years. We discussed the progress of different groups of pupils and the school's plans for improvement.

In addition, I considered evidence from a range of documentation, including the school's records about attendance and keeping children safe. I checked the school's single central register (the school's record of safeguarding recruitment checks on staff) to ensure that it met current safeguarding regulations. I examined the school's website and found that it met requirements on the publication of specified information.