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Debbie Howell
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Howell

Short inspection of Mickleton Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 July 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 October 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 your appointment in January, you have sensibly taken time to understand the school's context and its key areas for development. Consequently, you know the school well. You have an open, collegiate style of leadership. This is because you believe it is important to empower others to do their jobs and take responsibility for their work. You, with the support of a strengthening senior leadership team, are working with staff effectively to move the school forward.

Leaders are well supported by governors, who are highly committed to the school. As one governor said, 'We feel passionate about the school.' Governors bring a wide range of skills and experience to the full board. They take an active involvement in school affairs, appropriate to their role, and provide suitable challenge to hold you to account.

You have benefited from the support of the local authority school improvement adviser. She has helped you to settle into your new role and identify key priorities. She has also helped to broker reviews of school performance from another external adviser. This work has rightly focused on the achievement of different groups of pupils and improving the quality of teaching.

Leaders and the wider staff continue to nurture a culture in which pupils are valued for who they are. Staff care about 'the whole child' and ensure that pupils'

educational experience is rich and diverse. At this school, learning is regarded as something to be enjoyed. Classrooms and corridors are bright, vivid and welcoming, showcasing pupils' work and acting as an additional learning resource. Pupils respond well to this environment and work enthusiastically as a result.

You recognise the importance of establishing a good relationship with parents. For example, you greet parents each morning at the school gates as pupils come into school. However, there is a minority of parents who do not think that communication is good enough between school and home. They do not always feel well informed about leaders' decisions, even though these decisions are taken in good faith and the best interests of pupils.

Steady, focused leadership that draws on the strengths of staff is helping to maintain the good quality of teaching. This helped to stabilise teaching when experienced staff left and new staff joined the school. Leaders monitor teaching closely to identify weaknesses and provide professional development to staff according to need. Staff have high expectations of pupils and manage behaviour well, so that pupils are ready for learning. As a result, pupils in most year groups achieve well across the curriculum.

At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. These included establishing the effectiveness of actions taken to raise the achievement of pupils throughout the school, including early years. We also considered whether safeguarding is effective. These lines of enquiry are considered below under 'Safeguarding' and 'Inspection findings'.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders take a pragmatic, serious view of safeguarding because they understand its importance. This is why you commissioned an external audit of safeguarding when you took up post. Consequently, you and the deputy designated safeguarding lead have ensured that staff are appropriately trained in child protection and that systems are fit for purpose. Checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children are complete and up to date. You have made it clear that staff should report any concerns, however small they may be. Staff know the procedure to follow and whom to speak to should they have concerns.

Pupils who spoke with me reported that they feel safe in school, as do most of the pupils who responded to the pupil survey issued during the inspection. This is because the school site is secure and there are staff they can talk to if they have any worries. It is also because the large majority of pupils agree that bullying is rare and dealt with effectively when it does occur. One pupil told me, 'It is chased up really quickly.' Nearly all parents who responded to the online survey Parent View agree that their children are safe in school.

Site security has recently improved as new, more effective, gates have been installed. Staff also have a good line of sight from the main offices, which helps with monitoring of visitors on to the school site.

Inspection findings

- Pupils in key stage 2 are achieving well across a range of subjects. Pupils who left the school in 2016 made progress in reading, writing and mathematics that was in line with the national average. Current Year 6 pupils have made good progress in all their subjects; they are expected to achieve at a higher level in the national tests than last year's pupils. External moderation has confirmed your assessments of writing.
- The work of key stage 2 pupils shows that pupils of different abilities are being set interesting and challenging tasks. Teachers use their subject knowledge and understanding of the pupils to set work that meets different pupils' needs. They also provide a variety of resources to assist pupils. For example, teaching assistants work effectively with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities by helping them to scaffold their writing.
- Pupils are provided with a good opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in non-core subjects such as science, history and geography. They study interesting topics. For example, pupils learn about why rivers are important, and can describe how water cycles work and their importance to maintaining life on the planet.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, make comparable progress with their peers. This is because they enjoy their learning. They are guided and encouraged by teachers to engage with the work and think about how to make it better. Consequently, they take as much pride in their work as their peers. The large quantity of work produced by pupils is neatly presented and well laid out.
- You have carefully analysed the achievement of different groups of pupils across the school and identified where action most needs to be taken. As a result, you know that pupils in Year 2 are currently not making the progress that they are capable of. This is because behaviour, resources and pupil groupings are not yet being managed to best effect.
- Furthermore, you are disappointed with pupils' outcomes in the most recent Year 1 phonics screening check, which are below average. This has prompted you to investigate the causes for this underperformance so you can take appropriate action.
- Children in the early years are making good progress. This is because staff manage a full range of activities and resources effectively to capture children's interests. Children work independently, for example building towers from blocks, or in groups where they need to negotiate and compromise. Adults are well deployed to assist small groups of pupils develop their writing and mathematics.
- Staff monitor and track children's progress closely and use ongoing assessment to form an accurate, detailed understanding of their needs.
- Eighty-eight per cent of current children in Reception achieved a good level of development in 2017. This is significantly higher than previous years and is likely to compare well with the national average. Early years assessments have been moderated externally and judgments verified.

- Attendance overall, and for most groups of pupils, has been consistently above average. This continues to be the case for most groups of pupils during the 2016/17 academic year. However, absence has risen for a small number of pupils, which has disproportionately affected attendance figures in this small school. Staff are taking the right action to improve the attendance of these pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that further action is taken to:

- raise the achievement of pupils in Year 2 and improve phonics outcomes in Year 1
- improve communication with the minority of parents who do not feel fully informed about leaders' decisions.

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

Steve Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke with you and the deputy safeguarding lead. I also spoke with pupils, parents, representatives of the governing body and the school improvement adviser.

You and I made visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning. I also scrutinised the work in pupils' books.

A range of documentary evidence was considered, which included the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, current progress information and attendance information. I also considered governing body meeting minutes and the school improvement adviser's notes of visit. I scrutinised information about the suitability of staff to work with children and other safeguarding records.

In addition, I took account of 55 responses to the Parent View online survey, 21 responses to the pupil survey issued during the inspection and two letters received from parents.