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Mrs J Roden  
Headteacher  
Manor Hill First School  
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Dear Mrs Roden

### **Short inspection of Manor Hill First School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 September 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 September 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There has been a significant turnover in staff since your appointment in September 2016. You have managed these changes exceptionally well and have ensured that the quality of teaching and learning remains strong across the school. You provide inspirational leadership and have galvanised the staff, creating a committed team where all strive to ensure the best possible outcomes for the pupils. As one parent commented, 'All staff have such a positive impact on the children and Manor Hill is a happy place to be.'

You have high expectations and a clear vision to drive further improvements in the school. New assessment systems and carefully structured support and development for staff have strengthened the quality of teaching and learning. You undertook a review of the curriculum, introducing new approaches to teaching a wide range of topics, enabling pupils to have exciting learning experiences. You have embraced the excellent support commissioned through the local authority and a national support school to help make rapid improvements across the school. Consequently, outcomes in every year group improved at the end of 2017. However, you are not complacent and recognise that there is further work to be done, especially in widening and developing the leadership team to help you to drive further improvements in the school.

Both pupils and parents express very positive views about the school. Parents

particularly commented on the improvements which have been made since your appointment. Pupils are polite, respectful and, quite rightly, very proud of their school. They appreciate the support of their teachers and adults who work with them. Pupils have very positive learning behaviours and know that it is important that they work hard in lessons. It is a testament to you and your staff when they say that the only things that would make their school better would be having a chocolate fountain or a swimming pool on the field.

At the time of the last inspection, leaders were asked to develop pupils' understanding of Britain's multicultural society. You have ensured that the school's core values encourage pupils to look beyond the school community and into the wider world. Daily reflection times give pupils the opportunity to discuss world issues. The school assemblies cover a broad range of topics, including learning about other faiths and cultures. You have developed links with schools to widen pupils' understanding of other faiths. They enjoyed celebrating Diwali with pupils from another school. The new and creative curriculum has broadened pupils' learning experiences. Topics such as 'Misty Mountain Sierra' have enthused and developed their learning.

Leaders were also asked to ensure that the most able pupils were fully challenged. You have reviewed the school's approach to supporting the most able. This included a review of teaching and learning in all classes and the introduction of a more accurate and focused assessment system. Most-able pupils are now accurately identified and are being provided with more opportunities to deepen their learning in a range of subjects. However, teachers do not yet consistently challenge the most able pupils enough to enable them to reach their full potential. You recognise that this is an area for further development and have it as a key focus for school improvement.

There have been some changes to the governing body structure, including the management of the nursery provision. A strategic board has been developed and is responsible for the governance of the school. Governors new to the school are developing their skills, and there is a comprehensive governance monitoring programme in place. While effective governance of the school is in place, there still remains work to be done on ensuring that all governors effectively challenge you and your leaders to hold you to account for the school's performance.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. You have ensured that all staff are absolutely clear about their responsibilities to keep all pupils safe from harm. Training is up to date and the school's safeguarding policies and procedures are understood by all staff. Thorough checks are made on all staff, including those newly recruited to the school, to ensure that they pose no risk to the pupils. Careful risk assessments identify potential risks and how those risks are to be mitigated. Care plans are in place to support pupils with specific needs.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Older pupils are

appointed to the 'E-team' and support younger pupils to understand how to use computers safely, especially when using the internet. Pupils understand what bullying is but say it rarely happens. They know that there is always someone in school who will help them if they have a problem. For example, 'Playpals' support pupils who may feel lonely at breaktimes.

## **Inspection findings**

- Following your appointment, you and the local authority commissioned support undertook a review of the early years provision. As a result, this provision has now been completely redeveloped. Through the reorganisation of the Nursery and Reception classes, bright and vibrant learning environments have been provided which enable the children to explore and develop their learning in a variety of ways.
- There is strong teaching across the early years and children's learning is built upon very carefully from when they join as two-year-olds through to the point when they leave the early years to join Year 1. Adults make detailed assessments of what children can do and then plan carefully to ensure that activities are well matched to their developmental needs. You are continuing to develop the assessment systems to maximise the learning of every child. Your drive to improve the early years, including introducing the teaching of phonics in the Nursery classes, has paid great dividends. In 2017, outcomes at the end of Reception rose dramatically.
- You undertook a review of the teaching of writing at the beginning of 2016. Teachers now understand the expectations of what pupils must achieve by the end of each year and planning ensures that the curriculum is followed carefully. Teachers focus on embedding the skills pupils learn in grammar, punctuation and spelling in longer pieces of writing. Pupils are provided with stimulating experiences, such as trips to Cadbury World, to support them to write for a purpose. There is a culture of teachers working together across the school to plan effectively to develop pupils' writing skills. A strong focus on handwriting has resulted in improved presentation across the school. As a result of the range of improvements that were implemented, 2017 saw a significant rise in the outcomes for pupils' writing at the end of key stage 1.
- At the end of the last academic year, pupils' attendance was broadly in line with national averages. Attendance for some specific groups of pupils showed an improvement. You monitor the attendance of pupils very carefully and where concerns arise, you take swift action to address them. You are working hard to ensure that parents understand the importance of their children attending school regularly.
- The local authority commissioned support for the school last year alongside the work of a national support school, with some support continuing over this academic year. This support has been highly effective in helping you to take the school from strength to strength. You welcome all support and use it wisely to drive school improvement. The significantly improved outcomes at the end of early years, in the phonics screening check and at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics in 2017 are the positive results of all the hard

work you and your dedicated team have put in.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders new to their roles receive support and training to enhance their skills to further drive school improvement
- teachers provide a high level of challenge for the most able so that they make the progress of which they are capable
- further training and support is provided to governors to enable them to fully challenge leaders and hold them to account for school performance.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ann Pritchard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection I met with you, two members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. You joined me on brief visits to lessons. I talked to pupils about their learning and looked at examples of their work. I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime. I spoke to parents before school and to pupils throughout the day. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's own evaluation of its performance, the school development plan, documents relating to keeping pupils safe, attendance information and the most recent information about pupils' achievement. I considered the responses from the Ofsted online questionnaire from parents and a letter sent in by a parent. There were no responses from the staff or pupils' questionnaires.