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Mr Mark Watson
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Watson

Short inspection of Morven Park Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 13 February 2018, 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Staff work consistently well together, exchanging information and ideas for the benefit of every pupil. They hold you in high regard. They told me how you treat them fairly and encourage them to innovate in ways that will improve pupils' education. You are working well, as a key member of a collaborative partnership with eight other schools, to share ideas and training for staff. This is so that pupils' outcomes will rise across the local area. Staff have already received high-quality training in, for example, improving pupils' resilience, teaching mathematical reasoning and improving pupils' reading.

Your school's motto, 'We're all unique, together as one', reflects the importance you and your staff place on everyone in the school valuing each other, together with the strong sense of community which exists. Pupils see how staff work with each other both positively and politely. They also note how staff care for pupils and value what they have to say. This good modelling means that pupils become respectful and reflective themselves. They look after each other and property, and keep the school clean and tidy. You and the staff also ensure that pupils learn to become good young citizens by, for example, donating items for the community food bank, and by raising money to purchase school uniform for needy children in Africa.

Although achievement over time has been broadly in line with the national average, progress across key stage 2 fell considerably in 2016. This was because these pupils did not receive sufficiently effective teaching over time to meet the expectations of

the revised national curriculum. Teachers did not develop pupils' skills in vocabulary, deduction and retrieving information from texts sufficiently well. In addition, pupils lacked the ability to apply mathematical reasoning effectively. You wasted no time in addressing matters. Swift action drove up the quality of teaching. Staff received effective training in these aspects, and you arranged for specialist teachers to deliver the English and mathematics curriculum to the oldest pupils. You organised effective support for those pupils who needed to catch up. Consequently, results in key stage 2 rose dramatically last year. Pupils' progress improved substantially and a higher proportion than the national average attained the combined standard. Teaching in the school is now consistently good or better. However, you agree that you have not yet ensured that senior leaders provide focused support and advice to ensure that all teaching is equally effective.

You have responded appropriately to all the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection. Pupils' work shows that staff use a consistent approach to teach presentation, handwriting and spelling. Pupils take a pride in their work and write neatly. Spelling, which you noted was less strong historically, is improving quickly with teaching that is more effective. Pupils are learning to spell unfamiliar words and to apply them in their writing. The most able pupils are receiving appropriately challenging work, especially in mathematics. Books from pupils in Year 6 show that, for example, they are required to translate complex shapes across quadrants and to use a formula to calculate the areas of parallelograms. Pupils also apply their skills in mathematics across the curriculum. For instance, pupils in Year 4 learn about compass directions in their geography work.

The provision in the early years remains a strength of the school. Both the Nursery and Reception classrooms are vibrant learning environments, where children quickly settle in and discover the joy of learning. Because children typically begin with much lower levels of skills than others do nationally, staff immediately help them to catch up. They develop children's language by consistently communicating very well to them, so that children quickly learn to express themselves appropriately. During my visit, I saw children in the Nursery talking together and cooperating well as they tidied away sensibly at the end of their lesson. In the Reception classrooms, staff were helping children to read the labels on the Chinese wishing tree, while others could tell me the sounds from the letters they were drawing in the sand. In another area of the classroom, staff were teaching children how to write, for example, 'The dinosaurs' underpants of every shape and size' while members of staff were asking other children to think about which containers would need most water to fill them. This high-quality provision enables children to get off to an excellent start.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff have been trained well, and were able to describe to me accurately the wide variety of indicators that could point to different forms of abuse of a child. They have easy access to the school's safeguarding policy and know clearly their responsibility to report any concerns to you immediately. The records that I looked at confirm that you do not hesitate to make brisk referrals to, for example, the local authority's

multi-agency safeguarding hub, where this is needed. You were able to show me strong evidence of the extensive work you do in school and with other agencies to support the many pupils whose home circumstances may make them vulnerable.

Pupils I met with told me that they feel safe in school, and that very little bullying or unkindness takes place. They explained that, if they ever feel worried, staff will help them and any issue will be dealt with. Pupils are also taught well about how they can protect themselves by, for example, teaching pupils from a young age what to do if they ever become lost.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I looked at what had caused the sudden dip in achievement in key stage 2 in 2016, and how leaders and staff had attended to it. I also investigated the effectiveness of provision for pupils in the early years. In addition, I examined how staff are teaching pupils about relationships, and how to become good citizens when they are older.
- Progress fell considerably in key stage 2 in 2016. The Year 6 cohort in 2016 made significantly less progress than other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, you made a number of brisk improvements to the quality of teaching. This improved pupils' achievement greatly. Consequently, pupils in Year 6 last year made at least average progress in writing, and their progress in reading and mathematics was above average.
- School data shows that a very large majority of pupils currently in the school are making at least the progress expected of them. As a result, around seven in 10 are on track to meet the expectations for their age across subjects and year groups. Between one and two in 10 are on track to achieve a greater depth of understanding. Pupils' books confirm that they are making good progress.
- Senior leaders in the school are helping their colleagues to improve their teaching by, for example, holding staff meetings to inform them about areas such as calculation, spelling and assessing pupils' writing. However, they have not yet established a programme of personalised support for every teacher to ensure that teaching across the school reflects the best practice.
- Staff are helping pupils of all ages to developing a love of books, including classic texts such as 'Tom's midnight garden' and 'The gingerbread man'. Pupils I met told me enthusiastically how much they enjoy reading and sharing books.
- Almost all children enter the school in the Nursery with skills that are below, or well below, those typically found in other children of the same age. Staff work very effectively to enable children to catch up quickly.
- The leader of the early years has the highest of expectations for each child. She ensures that she and her staff meet the needs of children very well, and help them to make rapid progress. She keeps parents and carers fully informed of how their child is performing in relation to the skills typically found in other children nationally. She and her team supply parents with exemplary information about how they can help their child to learn at home.

- As a result of consistently strong teaching, children leave the early years well prepared for Year 1. The proportion that attains a good level of development is broadly in line with the national average.
- Pupils are taught well how to respect others. Those I met during my visit explained that it was important to treat everyone kindly, regardless of their appearance, ability, religion, culture, family background or structure, or language. For example, the 'Hands are not for hurting' project informs pupils about appropriate and inappropriate touching, as well as how their behaviour can affect others. Pupils are also taught how to be good citizens with, for example, older pupils showing younger ones how to stay calm and happy at lunchtimes and breaktimes.
- Unsurprisingly, your school remains very popular with parents. Ninety-seven per cent of those who responded to Parent View said that you lead the school well and that they would recommend it to others.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders of English and mathematics give each teacher an ongoing, bespoke package of support to ensure that teaching in all classes matches the very best.

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

Yours sincerely

Roary Pownall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and shared my lines of enquiry. I also met with members of the governing body, an assistant headteacher, the pastoral manager, the head of early years, the lead practitioner for English and the subject leader for personal, social, health and economic education. I considered the responses of parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and all free-text comments, along with the school's most recent questionnaire for parents. I met with a large number of staff to discuss their views on the school and its leadership. We visited classes across the school together. I looked at samples of pupils' work from different year groups, including the early years. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and met with a large group of them at breaktime. I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and its plans for further improvement. I considered a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information.