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Sue Harrington
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Dear Mrs Harrington

Short inspection of Greenleys First School

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Pupils feel safe, happy and well looked after. They like their lessons and behave well in class and around the school. Pupils are polite to adults and each other. They say that they enjoy school and those asked said that nothing needed to change.

Parents and carers believe that Greenleys is a great school. They appreciate the quality of care their children receive to ensure that they are happy and safe. The staff are proud to work at the school and are confident that pupils are making good progress and that their behaviour is well managed. Parents also report that the school respects them and listens carefully to any concerns they may have. Parents value the additional information they get about what their children are learning, for example in the recent phonics workshops.

Leaders and governors are ambitious for the pupils. You set yourselves high targets and focus on continually improving the school. You work hard to meet the needs of every pupil and constantly look for new ways to do this. Consequently, you have developed a range of additional ways to support pupils, such as the recent mindfulness project and the therapeutic art club.

You have maintained and built on the strengths identified in the last inspection. You have made many improvements. However, the work you undertake to drive improvements is not always focused on the areas of greatest need. With your team,

you have addressed the recommendations to improve aspects of teaching and ensure that pupils have more opportunities to develop their writing. You have rightly identified that the quality of teaching in mathematics lags behind that in English.

Since the last inspection, you have strengthened many aspects of teaching and created a more consistent approach across the school. You have improved the teaching of phonics and given pupils more opportunities to write at length. You have also ensured that teachers use the information they have about what pupils know and can do when they are planning lessons. As a result, more children now achieve a good level of development by the end of the reception year. Also, more pupils now achieve the expected level in phonics by the end of year 1. Work in pupils' books clearly demonstrates the very good progress pupils make in writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

This is a school that goes the extra mile to provide all pupils with the care and support they need. The governing body is proud of the nurturing environment in the school and the work it does to protect children from harm. Governors have good oversight of this aspect of the school through the regular visits carried out by the chair of governors.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The high level of need in the school is met with a strong and thorough approach. Staff are well trained, and members of the senior management team take their roles extremely seriously. Effective systems are in place to ensure that all adults have been checked and have received the training they need.

Inspection findings

- From their low starting points, pupils make at least good progress in the school. They leave the school with levels that are close to the national average as a result of the good teaching they receive. Over recent years, the number of pupils who are able to make greater rates of progress in reading and writing has increased. This is because the teaching and assessment of English is very strong. The teaching of mathematics is not yet as strong. Work is underway to develop this, as the teaching of mathematics has been rightly identified as a priority for improvement.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to practise their writing. The introduction of 'exciting' writing gives pupils the chance to practise their skills and provides teachers with valuable information about what pupils know and can do. Consequently, teachers have a good understanding of each pupil's ability.
- The teaching of phonics has been strengthened across the school. Staff training and the introduction of a whole-school approach to teaching phonics have resulted in greater rates of progress for pupils. This work has been further improved by the introduction of spelling and handwriting activities, so that pupils learn about these three things together. The impact of this work can be seen in the strong progress over time, evident in pupils' books.

- Pupil progress Meetings to discuss each individual's progress ensure that pupils who are not making sufficient progress are quickly identified. A broad range of interventions are used to help these pupils to catch up. The tracking of what pupils know and can do has been improved. As a result, leaders and governors have a very clear understanding of pupils' progress.
- Leaders are focused on continually improving all aspects of the school. Self-evaluation is accurate and rightly identifies areas that need to improve. However, plans for development are too complicated and are not sharply focused on the areas that need to improve. As a result, some improvements are delivered too slowly.
- Leaders have rightly identified mathematics as an area that needs to improve. While this work has started, the pace of change has been slow. Pupils do not yet regularly experience challenging activities that require them to show what they know and can do. Consequently, teachers are not able to quickly identify and remedy any misconceptions pupils may have.
- Attendance has improved each year for the past five years, and is now very close to the national average. Leaders undertake a wide variety of activities to promote regular attendance at school. Good attendance is celebrated with regular rewards and assemblies. Leaders are very clear with parents about the importance of good attendance at school and work hard to reduce the number of extended holidays some parents take. However, the level of persistent absence remains high. This slows the learning of some pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- mathematics lessons contain sufficient challenge
- improvement activities focus on areas of weaker practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Minns
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection I met with you and the deputy headteacher to discuss a range of issues including the quality of teaching, safeguarding and pupils' progress. I also met with two teachers, the chair of the governing body and your local authority improvement partner. I visited Reception classrooms with the deputy

headteacher and key stage 1 lessons with you. Together, we observed pupils during their lessons and looked at pupils' work. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and met with a small group of pupils to gather their views. I observed the behaviour of pupils and spoke to them about the school. I reviewed school documentation, including the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding. I took account of 11 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, including five written comments. I also considered 19 responses to the staff survey.