

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr Andrew Debenham  
Headteacher  
Millway Primary School  
Millway  
Duston  
Northampton  
Northamptonshire  
NN5 6ES

Dear Mr Debenham

### **Short inspection of Millway Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 October 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 took over the headship in 2014 and you lead the school well. Together with your senior leaders and managers, you have identified accurately what the school needs to do to continue to improve. You and your staff team demonstrate drive and determination to work towards securing these priorities. As a result, the outcomes overall for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics have improved and are close to or above national averages.

Millway Primary School is popular with parents and carers, many of whom have made the decision to travel from outside the local area to ensure that their children can attend the school. Your school has an impressive learning environment, inside and around the extensive grounds. The school has a calm and positive atmosphere. Pupils say they love coming to school, which is reflected in their good attendance. One pupil summed this up by describing the school as 'potential-giving, helpful and fun'. The relationships between adults and children are good, which helps ensure productive and purposeful learning in classes across the school. The school places much emphasis on providing additional activities to enrich school life for the pupils, particularly in relation to music and sport. A considerable proportion of pupils play a musical instrument and there are many opportunities to represent the school at a wide variety of sporting competitions and events.

At the previous inspection, the inspectors asked the school to continue to raise the achievement of pupils. You have had much success with this area for improvement. Leaders and teachers have an accurate understanding of pupils' progress during lessons and over time, and plan learning opportunities to challenge pupils from their individual starting points. Although there was a dip in mathematics outcomes in 2017 at key stage 2, many initiatives have been put in place to redress this. These include a greater focus on practical activities and the introduction of a variety of new resources. The experienced phase leaders monitor the teaching and learning closely and have helped to raise the expectations of staff and pupils. You recognise that there is further work to be done to build on recent improvements.

There is an emphasis on each pupil having individual targets in reading, writing and mathematics. These are used consistently across the school, with teachers making reference to the targets in their feedback, which is in line with the school's policy. This focus is consolidated by pupils regularly assessing their own work, and that of their peers, against the targets set. Consequently, the work in pupils' books shows that most pupils, of both sexes, are making good or better progress from their starting points. There are some inconsistencies apparent in the teaching and learning of writing. Younger pupils do not always reach the expectations for their age, especially when compared with the higher outcomes at the end of key stage 2.

You are ably supported by the governors, who are skilled in carrying out their roles effectively. They have developed an effective balance between providing support and challenge to the school. Governors show a very sound understanding of the areas to develop, they visit regularly and they play an active part in school improvement planning.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and the other designated safeguarding leaders rightly place the highest priority on keeping pupils safe. Pupils and parents recognise this and value the care that is taken by all members of staff. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

The school carries out all necessary checks on adults before they are allowed to work or volunteer at the school. All staff and governors receive regular training to keep their knowledge up to date and to ensure that they are clear about their safeguarding responsibilities. The records maintained are detailed, kept securely and of high quality. You review the safeguarding arrangements regularly and are well supported by a knowledgeable and experienced nominated governor. You have established strong links with external agencies, which helps support prompt communications should any concerns over a pupil's welfare arise.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and know what to do if they are unhappy or have a problem. They say that any instances of bullying are rare. Pupils are encouraged to take on positions of responsibility, with older pupils having many opportunities to help nurture their younger peers.

## Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This is because you keep a keen eye on how well pupils are doing. Where they could be doing better, you act quickly to help them to catch up.
- You seek support from other local schools and advisers to check that school leaders are accurate in their assessments of how well pupils are doing.
- There was an uncharacteristic fall in the attainment of pupils in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. You and your leadership team recognised this and have introduced clear strategies to improve pupils' progress in mathematics. These include introducing short and regular checks on pupils' knowledge and understanding, and increasing the range of activities to develop their reasoning skills.
- Recent assessment data indicated that girls were outperforming boys in some subjects. This was particularly apparent in reading, writing and mathematics attainment at key stage 2. However, the boys did achieve results broadly in line with boys nationally in reading, and exceeded those nationally in writing. In 2016, this picture was reversed when boys achieved more positive results. Work in pupils' books shows that boys and girls are making similar progress overall in all subjects and age groups.
- The pupil premium is used well to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils by the end of key stage 2 is in line with, and often better than, other pupils in the school and nationally.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This helps ensure that these pupils generally make expected or better progress from their starting points, with their social and emotional needs also being met well.
- There are some inconsistencies in the teaching of writing across the school, which is reflected in the weaker outcomes achieved in key stage 1 in 2017 when compared with reading and mathematics. School leaders have recognised this, following your lesson observations and assessment analyses. You are now planning to ensure greater coherence in the teaching and learning of writing in order to accelerate progress as pupils move through the school.
- Children in the early years foundation stage enjoy a rich and welcoming learning environment. They have many opportunities to practise their key skills in a wide variety of child-led and adult-led activities. For instance, on one of the many activity tables, the children were planting seeds, and the accompanying adult skilfully introduced key instruction words as they dug into the compost. Similarly, children were enjoying pedalling vehicles around a track, with one child operating the 'stop' and 'go' signs, and another sorting the cars in the garage.
- The vast majority of parents who spoke with me or responded to the online survey were very positive about the school. They particularly mentioned how happy their children are at Millway Primary School and how the school meets the needs of the local community well.

- The behaviour of pupils is a strength of the school. This is particularly noticeable in lessons, where pupils' attitudes for learning are very positive. They show respect for adults and for each other, which helps promote the purposeful learning environment.
- Pupils enjoy the many opportunities they have to represent the school in sporting activities. Indeed, a large group of older pupils were heading off to a cross-country running competition on the day of the inspection. They wear their sports representation badges with pride, with different colours indicating how many events they have competed in. Pupils also spoke of the emphasis that music has in the school, with a specialist music teacher enabling all to excel. Peripatetic tutors help over a quarter of the pupils to learn to play a musical instrument. During the inspection, I heard an impressive rehearsal for a forthcoming concert.
- The school is committed to supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities, such as being playground, computer or corridor monitors. They take these roles very seriously. For instance, when talking with pupils, one girl checked her watch and asked to be excused slightly earlier as she needed to carry out her monitor duty, helping younger children during their lunchtime library visit. There is rich evidence in the displays around the school demonstrating the broad curriculum and the wide variety of activities which are helping to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Examples include colourful and interactive displays of different world religions, e-safety and history timelines.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils are given opportunities to practise their investigative and reasoning skills in mathematics so that a greater proportion of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve the expected standard and more are enabled to work at a greater depth
- pupils' writing improves by ensuring that there are high expectations and consistent approaches to the teaching and learning of writing across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Yvonne Watts  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and shared my key lines of enquiry. I also met with members of your senior and middle leadership team, the chair of governors and other members of the governing body. I spoke with pupils from Years 5 and 6, and with parents as they brought their children to school. I considered the 96 responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 15 responses to a staff survey. Together, we visited classes to see the learning that was taking place in every year group and looked at a sample of pupils' English and mathematics books. I observed pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons. I looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plans, assessment information, the pupil premium strategy and documentation relating to safeguarding.