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Ms Nikki Brown
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Brown

Short inspection of Morley Memorial Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Your calm and forward-thinking leadership enables a positive direction for the school. The school serves the needs of the community well. You skilfully manage the two sites of the school. Other effective leaders, coupled with a strong governing body, provide further capacity to the leadership of the school. You responded swiftly and successfully to areas that required improvement from the previous inspection. Pupils are proud of their school and talk enthusiastically about the things they do. They behave very well and have a good understanding of the school's values.

You have worked hard to give additional leadership capacity to the school. You work closely with your highly capable deputy headteacher and three senior leaders. Teaching is effective and, as a senior team, you carry out checks on the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make. Feedback to staff is precise, so that they know exactly what to improve in their teaching. Staff appreciate the advice and the range of training opportunities they receive. You have also developed a new assessment system that includes improved tracking of the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, this enables you and the staff to successfully identify where pupils' progress needs to be accelerated.

You have ensured that Reception children get off to a good start in the early years. It is a welcoming and engaging environment for children. Staff plan interesting and challenging learning activities, so that children make good progress. The outdoor environment is used well to stimulate children's curiosity. Children are settled and happy and socialise well.

You have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced, and leadership of the curriculum is strong. Your strategy of using open-ended questions to engage pupils, such as, 'What did the Egyptians do for us?' and 'Did Martin Luther King's dream come true?' is having a positive impact. Pupils develop a variety of skills across the different subjects and are encouraged to be artists, engineers, historians and musicians. In particular, science and design technology are strengths, where you have sought expertise from the local community to support pupils' skill acquisition. For example, experts from the local community visited the school and pupils 'designed' new buildings for the local university. These real-life experiences enable pupils to develop the key skills required when they move to secondary school and certainly support the school to achieve its strap line of 'making learning irresistible'. Teachers routinely assess all subjects across the curriculum, but there is not yet the consistency of understanding of age-related expectations and greater depth that there is with reading, writing and mathematics. Therefore subject leaders of foundation subjects do not yet have a thorough understanding of what is needed to develop provision in their areas of responsibility.

Governors are extremely capable and skilled. They have a deep understanding of the school and provide an effective blend of challenge and support. They are active and use school visits to check that the priorities of the school improvement plan are being implemented effectively. Governors have challenged school leaders on the recent end of key stage 2 assessments. As a result, they have been part of a drive to accelerate key priorities. For example, a governor with responsibilities for disadvantaged pupils has worked closely with you to monitor the impact of strategies to overcome the barriers to learning for this group of pupils.

The vast majority of parents and carers are positive about the quality of education. Almost all parents would recommend the school to others. Several parents commented positively on its caring ethos and the individualised support it provides. Comments such as, 'The school and its leadership strive to provide a safe and nurturing environment for its children as well as an excellent education' and, 'I am extremely happy with the school. My child is very happy and is learning really quickly' are typical.

Safeguarding is effective.

The well-organised arrangements for safeguarding are central to keeping pupils safe. Your record-keeping of concerns is meticulous. You monitor and follow up concerns thoroughly. The capacity for safeguarding pupils is strong because you have staff trained to a senior level. Governors are absolutely clear about their statutory responsibilities and they carry out appropriate checks on key processes, such as the vetting of staff. Staff know pupils very well and are quick to notice any changes in behaviour. You ensure that staff are regularly updated on their

safeguarding responsibilities. As a result, there is a good safeguarding culture in the school and risks are minimised.

Pupils enjoy learning about how to keep themselves safe. They have mature attitudes towards their responsibility to be vigilant when they are on the internet.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry to establish whether the school remains good was to consider how well the most able pupils perform compared with their peers nationally. In 2016 and 2017, at the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher standard in reading and mathematics was above the national average. You recognised that the percentage of the most able pupils achieving greater depth in writing needed improving by making it a key priority in your school improvement plan. The work in pupils' writing books demonstrates that pupils are being given more challenging work and writing progress across the school is becoming strong. Pupils' written skills are efficient and they receive regular opportunities to apply their skills in practice throughout the curriculum. As a result, the number of pupils achieving the higher standard is rising throughout the school and expected to do so once again in 2018.
- However, the level of challenge for the most able pupils, including the disadvantaged most able, is not consistently high across subjects other than English, mathematics and science. The most able pupils are not routinely challenged in the foundation subjects and as a result they are not always reaching their potential to excel in, for example, art, history or geography.
- My second line of enquiry centred on the school's leadership capacity to secure further improvements. Since your appointment in January 2015, you have built a strong senior leadership team. Following a restructure of previous roles, the school has leaders that have high expectations for pupils and staff. Clearly defined leadership roles have been created to enable the senior leadership team to monitor their areas of responsibilities effectively. As a result, the school has a well-written school improvement plan that is enabling the whole-school community to tackle the areas for development. For example, leaders responsible for assessment refined the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress using prior-attainment information. Monitoring of this information has led to staff participating in recently formed working parties that have played a key role in the improvements seen.
- Another key line of enquiry focused on pupils' writing progress at key stage 2 and leaders' actions to address the below-average progress scores in 2016 and 2017. You have correctly identified this as an area for school improvement and also for the attainment of boys to improve. Pupils are provided with a variety of writing opportunities across the curriculum that now appeal to both boys and girls. Pupils stated how much they like their writing being showcased in class displays and around the school. Children in the early years are encouraged to write in a variety of different ways, and this is enabling their writing skills to flourish at an early age and preparing them well for their time at school.

- As a result of leaders' actions, writing is becoming a strength of the school. Leaders have addressed the gender difference between boys and girls, and teachers plan writing opportunities that allow boys to write from first-hand experiences and with an audience in mind. For example, pupils in key stage 1 visited the current building work taking place on the school site and wrote detailed explanations about how the machinery works. Within key stage 2, a recent 'science week' allowed pupils to write instructions to a high standard. Consequently, boys' writing is now typically in line with girls' across the school and pupils' progress from starting points is strong over time.
- My final line of enquiry focused on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Numbers of disadvantaged pupils at the school have been small in recent years and assessment information has fluctuated as a result. Leaders have recently implemented an individualised approach. Pupils are now closely monitored and their progress tracked from their prior learning positions. A range of strategies to overcome each pupil's individual barriers to learning have been introduced, and the impact is evident within pupils' English and mathematics workbooks. For example, online mathematics resources have been purchased for those disadvantaged pupils who require extra support. As a result, the progress of current pupils eligible for the pupil premium grant is good. However, you recognise that further work is required to ensure that the most able disadvantaged pupils excel in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, receive the same level of high challenge in the foundation subjects as they do in English, mathematics and science
- teachers are making consistent assessments within subjects other than English and mathematics, so that subject leaders have a comprehensive understanding of their areas of responsibility.

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

Yours sincerely

Joseph Figg
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with you and your senior leadership team and school governors, including the chair of governors and had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I spoke to a group of pupils and individual pupils around the school.

We made visits to lessons to observe pupils' learning and took a learning walk around the school. We also looked at pupils' books across a range of ages and abilities as well as information from the school's assessment system.

I scrutinised a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, current progress information and pupil-attendance information. I evaluated safeguarding referrals and child-protection records, including the single central record. I also looked at the school's website.

In addition, I took account of 68 responses to the Parent View online survey, 65 free-text comments from parents and 27 responses to the staff questionnaire.