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Mr Bryan Harrison
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Dear Mr Harrison

Short inspection of Miriam Lord Community Primary 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 July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your team are resolved that your school will welcome all pupils and you celebrate the rich heritage and experiences that they arrive with. Your governors are experienced and highly effective in holding you and your leaders to account. Together, you are determined to ensure that pupils who arrive in school during the school year settle quickly to learning and make appropriate progress.

Staff and pupils work in harmony throughout school. As a result, pupils are content and secure in their learning. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is studious and calm. They demonstrate respect for their teachers and disruptions to learning are extremely rare.

Following the previous inspection, you were asked to improve the quality of teaching and to raise achievement, especially in reading and mathematics. You have introduced new ways of teaching mathematics and ensured that all staff are trained and confident to deliver mathematics lessons. Work in pupils' books shows that they are rapidly learning new skills and applying them more securely to mathematical problems. As a result, the proportion of pupils working at expected standards has increased throughout school and progress in mathematics is broadly in line with national figures.

In 2016, at the end of key stages 1 and 2, pupils made secure progress. In 2017,

despite increasing proportions of pupils making strong progress in writing and mathematics, their progress in reading was less secure. Consequently, you introduced a raft of measures to reverse this pattern. You began by investigating which aspects of reading with which pupils were struggling. Your leader for literacy successfully introduced staff to new ways of teaching reading. You purchased a new reading scheme that appeals to pupils of all ages, no matter how capable a reader they are, and which enables pupils to use their phonics to work out new words.

You have implemented rigorous processes to enable you to track closely the progress of individual pupils. Thus your assessment information shows that more pupils are now on track to achieve standards expected for their age in both key stages 1 and 2.

Safeguarding is effective.

Together with your governors, you have ensured that safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date, fit for purpose and reflect the most recent guidance on preventing pupils from harm. You have not shied away from dealing with some difficult issues related to safeguarding. You have assessed the risks to pupils with regard to school activities and trips and have ensured that appropriate procedures are in place, for example in providing intimate care. Pupils report feeling safe and say that bullying is not common at Miriam Lord because staff will deal with it.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I wanted to find out how effectively leaders are promoting reading and to what extent the quality of teaching of reading has improved. I also wanted to know how successfully leaders had managed to raise pupils' attendance so they do not miss valuable learning.
- You and your governors have invested in new reading books and refitted and stocked the library to encourage pupils to develop a positive reading habit. Staff regularly run events for parents to help them to read with their children and have successfully encouraged wider reading. Your recent monitoring shows that over 70% of pupils in each year group now read regularly at home. Pupils spoken to say that they 'love reading' and all could give examples of books they have really enjoyed.
- Leaders are aware that girls, generally, do better than boys in reading. They have chosen books and introduced incentives to promote reading carefully to appeal to both genders. Boys like receiving raffle tickets and the chance to win a book in acknowledgement of regular reading, for example. However, although teachers have given much attention to helping pupils to answer comprehension questions and grammar exercises, not all reading lessons are effective in helping pupils to develop their understanding and use of vocabulary.
- Although it remains below national averages, pupils' attainment in phonics has improved over the last three years and a higher proportion of pupils are on track to attain the phonics screening check again this year. Leaders recognise that girls are doing better than boys in learning phonics and the difference between boys

at Miriam Lord and boys nationally remains wide. Those pupils who read to the inspector had a tendency to skim over words they were unfamiliar with, rather than attempt to use their phonics to decode them.

- Almost all children enter the school with skills and abilities below those typically seen and around one quarter of children demonstrate skills that are well below average. Overall, good teaching is helping children to learn quickly, so that outcomes at the end of Reception have improved over a three-year period. This year, an even higher proportion of children are on track to achieve a good level of development. However, children are still not learning the skills they need to support them with early reading and writing quickly enough. This is because teachers have not planned, with sufficient precision, to promote the development of early vocabulary and to ensure that children learn well in all activities.
- You, and your head of school, have robustly promoted regular attendance. Your pastoral manager quickly makes contact with the families of pupils who are absent. Because of this work, attendance has risen, but remains just below national figures. This is mainly due to the persistent absence of some families who are removing their children for extended periods. Consequently, persistent absence is nearly twice the national average and some pupils are too frequently missing valuable learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a higher proportion of pupils are well prepared for reading by:
 - ensuring precise planning of activities in the early years which will enable children to develop early reading and writing skills more swiftly
 - improving the rigour and accuracy with which phonics is taught in all key stages
 - making sure that all staff are fully trained in the delivery of phonics so they can support children's rapid acquisition of phonics and reading skills
 - providing pupils with meaningful opportunities to learn and understand more complex words that will enable them to rapidly identify, understand and use a wider range of vocabulary in reading.
- they continue to work with parents and carers to reduce pupils' persistent absence.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I was able to discuss the work of the school with you and your staff. We visited classrooms together to observe teaching and learning. I was able to look at pupils' work in books and to speak with pupils throughout the day. I listened to pupils read from Reception, Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6. Discussions with the local authority representative and two members of your governing body helped to provide additional information. School documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website were also taken into account. I looked at Ofsted's online questionnaires to gather the views of 12 pupils and 21 staff. There were too few responses on the Ofsted parent questionnaire, Parent View, to register any information.