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Mrs N Foster
Headteacher
Mellor Community Primary School
Checketts Road
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Dear Mrs Foster

Short inspection of Mellor Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 April 2018 with Heidi Malliff, HMI, 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 January 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

The school's motto, 'Be the best you can be', inspires pupils and staff to make your school a special place. The range of music that plays throughout the building, the quality of art on display and the policy of everyone addressing one another by their first names are just a few of Mellor's distinctive qualities. It is an inclusive and friendly school that prides itself on helping pupils of all abilities, needs and backgrounds to succeed. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who shared their views were full of praise for your school. One comment captured their warm feeling: 'A fantastic school with staff at all levels being really supportive and helpful.' Each class has a parent representative. There are regular meetings between the parent representatives and senior leaders. These meetings make a strong contribution to securing your aim that Mellor is a school its community can be proud of.

Staff are proud to work at Mellor. The great majority judge that it has improved a lot since the previous inspection. The respect staff have for you and the wider leadership team has been crucial to this improvement. Staff feel valued. They, like the pupils, feel part of a family. They want the best for their pupils and appreciate the efforts you make to enable them be increasingly effective. For example, they embrace opportunities to video their own lessons so that they can reflect upon how they could develop their teaching in the future. You are confident that such strategies have improved the quality of teaching. As a result, standards have risen

throughout the school. Progress is particularly strong in writing and mathematics. Progress in reading is slower because pupils have quite a narrow vocabulary and so can struggle to understand the meaning of what they read.

Throughout the inspection, you were keen to acknowledge the role your predecessor played, and indeed continues to play, in ensuring that the school serves its community so successfully. Her expertise and energy helped shape a curriculum that has many exceptional aspects. Staff and pupils are understandably proud of the school's art projects, its environmental activities, its involvement with community groups and its sporting achievements. A multitude of external organisations have recognised the school's commitment to providing a truly rich education for all of its pupils. The selection of the school to be closely involved with Tim Peake's mission on the International Space Station gives a sense of Mellor's well-deserved reputation for having a fabulous curriculum.

Governors have a strong range of skills and experience. This ensures very effective governance. They carry out their roles and responsibilities well, striking the right balance between challenge and support. Members of the governing body visit the school often to support your work and that of other leaders. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and where it still needs to do better.

You and other leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Our visits to lessons showed that teachers now keep a close eye on how well pupils understand the tasks that they are working on. As a result, teachers can quickly provide any additional support or challenge that pupils need. This effective practice demonstrates the greater impact leaders now have on the quality of teaching. Since the previous inspection, you and your predecessor have modelled strong leadership to other leaders. You have ensured that they have benefited from a range of professional development opportunities. Your leadership team has grown in expertise, experience and confidence. This enables it to play a full part in securing better teaching and learning throughout all year groups.

The record of improved standards and progress over the last three years has not diminished your desire for further improvement. You recognise that at the end of Reception and key stage 2, more pupils should be exceeding the standards expected for their age. Ensuring that teaching in these areas really stretches the most able pupils is a next step for the school. You are also determined to improve pupils' progress and standards in reading and to reduce further the above-average level of persistent absence.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team and governors ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The well-being of pupils is their highest priority. There are seven designated safeguarding leads in the school. Pupils are confident that these, and indeed all of the school's staff, will do all that they can to keep them safe. Pupils speak positively about visitors to the school, such as police officers and fire fighters,

who give them guidance on keeping safe.

The school has strong links with a wide range of local agencies. These ensure that the most vulnerable pupils receive prompt and appropriate support. Key members of staff whose prime responsibility is the welfare of the pupils know the local community well. This helps them to work effectively with families and local organisations.

Staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training. As a result, they are up to date in their knowledge and understanding.

Inspection findings

- Since the last inspection, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception Year has increased year on year. These improvements are the result of staffing changes that have improved the quality of teaching, and the positive impact of new approaches to teaching phonics, reading, writing and mathematics. The high number of staff who are fluent in a range of languages enables all parents to understand how they can support their child's learning at home.
- In recent years, disadvantaged children have not attained as highly as other children by the end of Reception. However, the carefully targeted use of the additional funding provided to support disadvantaged children is addressing this issue very successfully. On children's entry to the school, staff quickly identify any areas where a child's development is below that typical of children their age. This means that staff, and parents, are clear about where a child needs extra help. For example, individual children have made rapid progress as result of programmes that improve their gross and fine motor skills. Currently, the proportion of disadvantaged children on track to attain a good level of development is greater than that of other children in all areas apart from literacy.
- Pupils in key stage 2 consistently make good progress in mathematics. The proportion of pupils who attain the expected standard is in line with the national average in both key stage 1 and key stage 2. Factors contributing to these outcomes include teachers:
 - using assessment information to identify gaps in pupils' learning and adjusting their teaching accordingly
 - promoting reasoning and problem-solving skills through all year groups
 - giving pupils' relevant opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects
 - placing a high priority on knowledge of the multiplication tables.
- Pupils' progress and attainment in reading in key stage 2 have been below average since the previous inspection. This is because pupils do not have a wide enough vocabulary to grasp easily the meaning of books and texts that have unusual or uncommon words. This means that pupils often struggle to answer questions that check their understanding of what they have read. Teachers are successfully encouraging pupils to read more widely and to use dictionaries

whenever they come across unfamiliar words. However, currently, teaching does not maximise the opportunities provided through the school's rich curriculum to significantly widen pupils' vocabulary.

- The rate of persistent absence in the last two school years was well above the national average. This reflects the negative impact on attendance of pupils missing school on days of religious significance or when taking holidays during term time. The school does take robust action when attendance falls below 96% and misses no opportunity to promote the importance of regular attendance to both parents and pupils. Information about persistent absence shows a reduction during the current school year. However, school leaders understand that there can be no relaxation in their drive to reduce it still further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers maximise the opportunities provided by the school's curriculum to widen pupils' vocabulary in order to improve progress and raise standards in reading
- teachers in early years provide appropriately challenging activities for the most able children throughout the school day, so that a greater proportion of children exceed the early learning goals across the curriculum
- teachers in key stage 2 have greater ambition for the most able pupils, so that increased proportions of pupils reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics
- the drive to reduce persistent absence is sustained through continuing to educate pupils and parents about the importance of regular attendance, rewarding good attendance and robustly challenging poor attendance.

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

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you and other members of your senior leadership team. We discussed the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' progress, and improvements made since the previous inspection. We also met with five members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Together with the senior leaders, we observed pupils in classrooms and spoke with them about their learning. We analysed work in pupils' books from across the curriculum and heard pupils read. We looked at a range of written

evidence, including documents relating to safeguarding and attendance. We spoke with parents at the start of the school day. We took account of the views expressed by 118 parents who completed the online survey, Parent View, as well as their written comments. I also considered the views of 45 members of staff and 460 pupils who returned their questionnaires.