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Mrs Rhona Perry  
Headteacher  
The Meads Primary School  
Mill Way  
East Grinstead  
West Sussex  
RH19 4DD

Dear Mrs Perry

### **Short inspection of The Meads Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 September 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 January 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

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

You have provided steady leadership, with strong support from the deputy headteacher, through periods of instability caused by changes to teaching staff. Staffing is now stable and you are developing the role of middle leaders. They are dedicated and innovative in their roles and play an effective part in the school's development. The full impact of their work is yet to be seen, however, particularly in raising the proportion of learners working at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.

You have developed a clear vision for the future, shared by all staff. Everyone is clear about how the school can improve further and their part in bringing this about. When you and your deputy headteacher visited lessons with me, you had a very accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning, including where it could improve. It was clear that initiatives in the teaching of writing and mathematics have been consistently implemented. While the full impact of these initiatives is yet to be seen, progress is accelerating and standards are rising across the school.

The majority of children in the early years, including those who join the setting with low starting points, reach a good level of development. Outcomes at the end of key stages 1 and 2 are now broadly in line with age-related expectations. Provisional results for 2018 at the end of key stage 2 show that the proportions of pupils

reaching the highest standards are improving. You recognise, however, that there is more to be done so that more pupils achieve at the highest standards.

A growing number of pupils join the school other than at the beginning of a school year, and staff are supportive and welcoming to them. Pupils were keen to tell me how kind their teachers are and how much they enjoy school. As a result of targeted actions, overall attendance is now broadly average. Despite the school's best efforts, however, persistent absence remains above national averages.

You have successfully tackled the areas for improvement that were identified in the last inspection. For instance, additional adults provide targeted and valuable support in lessons so that less-able pupils make good progress. Teachers now need to ensure that expectations and aspirations are consistently high for more-able learners, so they make even stronger progress.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

All staff understand safeguarding policies and procedures, resulting in early identification of concerns through well-established reporting systems.

There are well-kept records showing how the school works closely with other agencies to protect pupils from neglect or abuse.

Suitability checks on staff, volunteers and all who regularly visit the school are recorded and well maintained.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe from harm when on the internet. They say that behaviour in the school is good and that bullying is now rare. They have confidence that staff at the school resolve any problems, and say they feel listened to. They appreciate how you have changed routines at lunchtimes to minimise overcrowding, and that you provide a calm, safe environment for pupils.

### **Inspection findings**

- A raft of measures has ensured that standards are rising in the school for pupils of all abilities. Work in pupils' books demonstrates that pupils' writing across the school is improving. There are many examples of high-quality work, particularly in Years 5 and 6. However, not all most-able pupils are yet writing at the highest standards.
- Leaders have taken incisive action to improve reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics. Work in books shows that pupils are developing these skills rapidly and standards are rising. More challenge is evident across the school but in a few lessons progress slows because tasks are too easy for some pupils.
- Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, flourish in the Reception Year. They settle quickly into school routines and enjoy the good range of opportunities to learn across the early years curriculum. Staff manage children's learning well, and behaviour in the setting is excellent. Children are polite, kind to one another and make strong progress, including those who need to catch up from lower

starting points. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development is in line with national averages, and the number of children who exceed a good level of development in reading, writing and mathematics is rising.

- Leaders have focused on effective intervention programmes and more emphasis on pupils' emotional well-being to help the progress of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the attainment and progress of this group is rising rapidly and is in line with that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. However, attendance is lower for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities than for other pupils.
- Pupils have a very clear sense of responsibility within the school. Leaders afford them a wide range of opportunities, for example to become eco-warriors, sports monitors and playground 'buddies', and to raise money for their chosen charities. They feel safe in school. Incidents of poor behaviour and bullying have significantly reduced over time and are now very rare. Pupils say they trust their teachers to listen to their concerns, and they encourage one another to adhere to their class behaviour charter. They enjoy learning, especially experiences such as 'Victorian Day' and the wide range of extra-curricular clubs available.
- Governance is strong. The governing body knows the school's strengths and what needs to improve. Middle leaders now need to include governors in checking the impact of their actions in improving pupils' outcomes, so that they can be even more effective in holding leaders to account.
- Parents have confidence that their children are taught well. They appreciate the kindness of teachers and the way they foster their children's emotional and academic development. Some expressed concerns, however, about behaviour and bullying and the effectiveness of leaders' responses to these concerns. Records show that the school engages in a timely way to engage a range of agencies to improve behaviour and promote safeguarding. Behaviour seen on inspection was good. Pupils say bullying is rare. Nevertheless, you are aware that more effective engagement with some parents is a priority.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders engage effectively with parents to support pupils' development and improve attendance
- outcomes for all pupils rise further and that most-able pupils are challenged well to achieve the highest standards
- middle leaders develop their skills to support and challenge effectively, and that they involve governors in routinely checking the impact of their actions in improving outcomes for pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Lynda Welham  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I held several meetings with you and your deputy headteacher. I also met with your middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and several pupils. Records of the school's safeguarding procedures for employing staff were scrutinised with the business manager. I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. Behaviour in lessons, around the school and at playtime was observed. I looked at records relating to the school's work with outside agencies to protect children at risk of neglect or abuse, as well as the school's own records of behaviour and the reporting of racist incidents. I checked correspondence between you and parents when they raised concerns about bullying. Your deputy headteacher accompanied us when we visited classrooms.

I viewed the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke informally to parents at the beginning of the school day.

I also looked at a range of pupils' books with your middle leaders and met with a group of pupils to hear their views of the school.