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Samantha Willans
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Dear Mrs Willans

Short inspection of Mytchett Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in November 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since the previous inspection, standards have declined. Published data for both 2016 and 2017 shows that while pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics was at least in line with age-related expectations, progress in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 was poor. Your predecessor began the process of taking action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics in order to raise pupils' attainment and progress. However, over time, sustained improvement had been hindered by variations in the quality of teaching and changes to staffing and leadership. Provisional outcomes for 2018 demonstrate that standards in mathematics are not yet good. In addition, outcomes in early years and the phonics screening check in 2018 dipped from their previously high levels. Since taking up post as headteacher at the beginning of this term, you have wasted no time in building your leadership team and prioritising raising standards, particularly in mathematics. It is too soon yet to see the impact of these actions.

The school continues to offer a very warm, nurturing and inclusive atmosphere. You have refreshed the school's values and are ensuring that these underpin all aspects of school life and support the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. This is demonstrated by pupils' highly positive

attitudes towards each other and adults. Parents and carers are very happy with the school. A typical statement was, 'Mytchett Primary is a lovely school with lovely children who all look after each other.' All the respondents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to others.

Together with the Kite Academy Trust and local governors, you have recently restructured subject leadership, delivered training for teachers and reinvigorated teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics, across the school. While there have been improvements, senior leaders are very aware that this training is ongoing. Our visits to lessons, and our review of current pupils' work, indicate that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics and phonics is still variable. Leaders are rightly focused on raising the level of challenge in teaching so that a greater proportion of pupils than previously achieve the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

Strong relationships ensure that pupils respect each other's ideas and that they work and play very well together. In lessons, pupils typically have very positive attitudes, engage well with teachers and learning support assistants, and work hard. These positive relationships underpin the strong progress that they make in reading and writing. However, in some mathematics lessons, when the pace of learning is not sufficiently challenging, some pupils can become distracted and disengage.

Senior leaders ensure that a range of bespoke support is offered to disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and that they are supported well. There is a strong sense of teamwork between leaders, teachers and learning support assistants. Parents appreciate the quality of support on offer and praised the dedication and support of leaders and staff.

Your self-evaluation of the school is carefully considered. Consequently, staff and governors share a pride in the school's strengths and are sharply focused on the areas that the school can improve further. You are currently working on detailed improvement plans. These are centred on your team's shared drive to continue to improve mathematics and to stretch and challenge the most able pupils. Regular support from the multi-academy trust and your involvement in partnerships with other schools have been used to good effect, enabling leaders to support moderation of pupils' work, source appropriate training for staff and ensure that the right actions are taken to make the required improvements. Your dedicated team of local governors offers challenge and support to leaders. Governors pay regular visits to the school and are kept up to date via leaders' tracking information and reports.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a welcoming, caring and inclusive ethos at Mytchett Primary School. You, your staff and governors rightly place a suitably high emphasis on pupils' safety and welfare. All safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. There is a culture of vigilance, supported by thorough record-keeping. Appropriate checks are made against all adults who work with pupils, and careful records are maintained. Staff

have appropriate and up-to-date training and so know what to do should they be worried about a pupil.

At the time of this inspection, the policies relating to safeguarding and behaviour were in the process of being updated and ratified by governors. Governors are kept well informed and work closely with staff to ensure that the work to keep pupils safe is given top priority and meets current requirements. When it has been necessary, open communication between leaders and other organisations has ensured timely and effective support for pupils of concern.

Staff, pupils and their parents report that pupils feel safe and well looked after at Mytchett Primary School. Pupils feel well cared for and told me they know who to go to should they have any concerns. They reported that they felt incidents of poor behaviour are rare and they trust adults to resolve any issues that may arise. All parents who responded to Parent View, and those I spoke to during the day, confirmed that their children are happy and feel safe here.

Inspection findings

- During this short inspection, as well as evaluating safeguarding arrangements, I focused on specific aspects of the school's provision including:
 - whether leaders have maintained the previously high standards in early years and key stage 1
 - how well leaders have responded to address previously weak outcomes for the most able pupils and in mathematics
 - the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - the quality and depth of learning across the wider curriculum.
- In recent years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception has been very high. Although this dipped in 2018, it is still in line with the national average. The Nursery class makes a particularly effective contribution to these good outcomes. Over the last three years outcomes in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 have declined, and in 2018 they were slightly below the national average. Staff are currently being supported with training to ensure a consistently high quality of teaching and learning in phonics.
- Recognising a dip in standards last year, leaders offered targeted support for Year 2 pupils to boost outcomes. However, some pupils have not made the progress they are capable of because their learning needs have not been fully met. Responding to this, you have taken appropriate action and adapted teaching in Year 3 in order to support pupils to catch up.
- The new approach to the teaching of mathematics is improving pupils' reasoning and problem-solving competencies. Leaders have ensured that all staff have received effective training this year. There are appropriate plans in place to further develop this new approach, and additional funding has been secured to facilitate further coaching for staff. The work that I looked at in pupils' books and

the lessons we visited together indicate that there is still variability in the quality of teaching of mathematics across the school. You have identified that improving the pace of learning and increasing the level of challenge within mathematics lessons, particularly for the most able pupils, are the school's top priorities. In addition, there is further work to do to ensure the best deployment of learning support assistants.

- Since taking up post at the start of this term, you have wasted no time in challenging poor punctuality and seeking to improve attendance. Overall attendance is in line with the national average for primary schools. However, you recognise that some groups, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, have had very high absence rates in the past. To address this, you have worked closely with some families to support individual improvements. However, leaders and governors are aware that more needs to be done to ensure that the attendance of these groups improves to match that of their peers.
- The school offers a broad and rich curriculum. The variety of clubs and sporting activities is highly valued by pupils and parents. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally promoted well. Pupils value the principle of equality and gain a good understanding of democracy and the rule of law, and this understanding supports them to become well prepared for life in modern Britain. However, pupils are not well enough informed to be able to confidently discuss different faiths and cultures.
- Teachers' planning does not contain sufficient detail of the sequence of subject-specific vocabulary and knowledge needed to underpin learning in different subjects across the curriculum. In addition, the development of practical skills in subjects such as science and design and technology are not made clear in teachers' plans. Consequently, pupils' books show that teachers' expectations are not as consistently high across the wider curriculum as they are in English and mathematics. Pupils, particularly the most able, are not set sufficiently challenging tasks which require them to problem-solve and think as deeply in science and the humanities as they do in English and mathematics. Although some exciting learning contexts are offered, curriculum coverage and pupils' progress are not yet strong across the wider curriculum.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers' expectations and the pace of learning in mathematics improve so that all groups are supported to make strong progress from their starting points
- inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics are eliminated
- the most able pupils are provided with still higher levels of challenge so that more achieve the higher standard by the end of Year 6 than in the past
- pupils are given more consistently challenging tasks in science and the wider curriculum so that their subject-specific knowledge and depth of thinking improve.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of Kite Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Surrey. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Newberry
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Meetings were held with you and your deputy headteachers, subject leaders, members of the local governing body, and the chief executive officer and two trustees of the Kite Academy Trust. Together, you and I visited classes in each of the year groups to look at teaching and learning. I looked at a range of pupils' work in their exercise books and considered examples of teachers' short-term and long-term planning. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school and had a meeting with a small group of pupils.

I considered 53 responses to Parent View, as well as speaking to a number of parents at the beginning of the day. I also considered the views expressed in 20 responses to a staff survey and one response to the pupil survey. I reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, pupils' progress information, and safeguarding policies, procedures and checks.