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Mrs Jane Whirledge
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Whirledge

Short inspection of Melbourne Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 10 January 2019, 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 June 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

Your leadership of Melbourne Junior School has established a positive and aspirational culture, founded on the school's motto that 'Only the best is good enough'. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and pupils consistently meet these expectations. By the time they leave, pupils are well prepared for their secondary schools. Standards at the end of Year 6 are consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Parents are proud of their village school. They say that it very successfully meets its aim of being 'a friendly, welcoming school where everyone is valued and appreciated'.

You place a high emphasis on training and staff development. You have established helpful partnerships with other local schools so that teachers can share and learn from best practice. These partnerships are directly improving the quality of teaching and learning. In lessons, pupils show good attitudes to learning. Lessons are free from interruptions caused by disruptive behaviour. Pupils are proud to share their work. They talk confidently about what they are learning.

Improvements since the previous inspection include:

- the positive impact of leadership at all levels on improving teaching and learning
- a revised approach to teaching reading that has raised pupils' reading skills and their enjoyment of reading

- better provision in areas such as art, music and sport
- more effective support for pupils who experience social or emotional difficulties.

Governors play an important role in sustaining the school's successes. They have a wide range of skills that help them fulfil their responsibilities. They visit the school regularly to ensure that they have an accurate understanding of its performance. They take great care when recruiting new staff to ensure that Melbourne continues to have a junior school it can be proud of.

Pupils appreciate the many sports and other physical activities that the curriculum provides. They are proud of the school's successes in sporting competitions, including table tennis, cross-country and orienteering. The quality of the pupils' artwork displayed around the school is impressive. Developing musical talents is also a priority. All Year 4 pupils learn to play a musical instrument. The playing of the school orchestra and the standard of singing in assembly are both very impressive. Visits to the school by musicians and artists offer pupils the opportunity to develop an interest in and love of the arts. Senior leaders also ensure that pupils learn about a range of cultures and faiths. For example, the curriculum includes visits to the National Holocaust Memorial Centre, a mosque and a gurdwara.

You have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are determined that the quality of education will continue to improve. Visits to lessons and work in pupils' books highlighted three areas where the quality of teaching should be improved. Pupils' writing books show that the lower-attaining pupils can struggle to craft effective and correctly punctuated sentences. This limits their ability to successfully complete the written tasks that they are set. In mathematics lessons, teachers do not always spot when pupils have not grasped the concept being taught. This means that they are not intervening promptly and providing necessary support. A final next step is to ensure that time is used efficiently in mathematics lessons and that there is plenty of challenge for the most able pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are fit for purpose. Staff are alert to signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. They know the procedures to follow if they have a concern or if a pupil discloses something to them. You, as designated safeguarding lead, have effective links with local agencies so that vulnerable pupils receive prompt support. You keep thorough records of all safeguarding concerns and store confidential information securely. Staff and parents judge that pupils are looked after well. Pupils have great respect for the adults who work in the school. They readily seek help if there are things at school or at home that worry them. Each afternoon, sessions are led by a member of staff who is skilled in helping pupils manage their feelings and overcome their anxieties. These sessions have a positive impact on pupils' academic progress as well as their emotional well-being.

Inspection findings

- The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. In both 2017 and 2018,

almost half of the Year 6 pupils attained the highest standard in the national reading assessments. Factors contributing to this above-average attainment include:

- a well-stocked school library with over 8000 books
- high-quality professional development of the teaching of reading
- daily reading of whole-class books that pupils love
- the success teachers have in encouraging pupils to read a wide range of books.

The subject leader's enthusiasm for reading has driven the improvements in this area since the previous inspection. She describes the changes in practice as a 'reading revolution'. Underpinning the renewed enthusiasm for reading are lists for each year group of recommended books. Staff and pupils alike enjoy reading their way through the lists.

- Developing pupils' reasoning skills was identified as an area for improvement in the previous inspection report. Progress towards meeting this goal has until recently been patchy. In 2017, pupils' progress in mathematics was below the national average. Senior leaders recognised that teaching was not ensuring that pupils were gaining a deep understanding of mathematical concepts. They sought external support to address this weakness. Staff visited schools where progress in mathematics was strong and a mathematics consultant led training in school. Mathematics teaching is more effective now at developing the pupils' reasoning skills. Pupils' workbooks show that they regularly apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems and explore lines of enquiry. In lessons, pupils are asked to explain and justify their ideas. Pupils' progress in 2018 was in line with the national average.
- In recent years, boys have made less progress than girls in reading and writing. Drawing on external expertise, staff have identified why some boys struggle in these areas. To overcome these barriers to better progress, teachers have made adjustments to how they teach reading and writing. In addition, senior leaders have acted to ensure that boys are as fully involved in the daily life of the school as girls, for example as school councillors and as members of the school choir and orchestra. Boys spoken to during the inspection were very positive about school. They are reading more frequently and their progress in reading at the end of Year 6 in 2018 was stronger than in the past. Progress in writing has also improved. Boys are responding well to the increased opportunities to write on topics that fire their imaginations and match their interests.
- Pupils enjoy a stimulating and interesting curriculum. As they move through the school, they gain knowledge and skills associated with the various subject areas through carefully planned topics. Their workbooks show how learning in subjects such as history and geography is sequenced so that, year on year, pupils consolidate their earlier learning at the same time as they study new topic areas. In all subjects, teachers' expectations are high. For example, the pupils' art and design portfolios show that pupils are skilled and imaginative artists who can express their creativity through a wide range of materials.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils who struggle to write correct and effective sentences receive effective teaching to improve their skills
- teachers check carefully on pupils' misunderstandings during mathematics lessons and provide prompt support
- time is used efficiently in mathematics lessons and there is plenty of challenge for the most able 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 Derbyshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and other members of staff to discuss the school's effectiveness. I also met with three governors and spoke with the local authority's link adviser. I met with the school council and talked with other pupils around the school and during lessons. I observed teaching and learning throughout the school. I looked at work in pupils' books and heard pupils singing and playing in the school orchestra.

I considered numerous documents, including those linked to keeping the pupils safe, the school's self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan. I considered the 92 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, together with the views of parents, gathered as they brought their children to school. I also took into account the responses of 21 members of staff and 209 pupils to their online surveys.