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Mrs Sandra Appleby
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Dear Mrs Appleby

Short inspection of Greenfields Primary School and Nursery

Following my visit to the school on 23 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 July 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

Leaders have established a strong culture of learning and high aspiration for everyone associated with Greenfields Primary School and Nursery. Corridor walls are adorned with messages of encouragement to fulfil the school's motto of, 'Dream, Believe, Achieve'. Examples of pupils' high-quality writing and photographs of activities that pupils can take part in during the school year are also displayed. Celebrating achievement is an important characteristic of the school. Pupils and parents and carers enjoy the weekly celebration assembly that takes place on Fridays. Pupils, having paraded down the 'red carpet', can receive a wide range of awards for attendance, as star pupil or for handwriting, for example. Parents are welcome to attend the assembly, share in their child's success and then to stay afterwards for tea, which is served by staff and pupils.

Leaders at all levels have a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school and use this information to plan for further improvements with precision. The academy scrutiny committee provides a layer of local governance for the school. Local governors have a very clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They meet with leaders, and benefit from training, to ensure that they understand

in detail the school's current priorities and how leaders are addressing them. The school is part of the David Ross Education Trust. The trust provides effective support and challenge to leaders. Leaders welcome colleagues from other schools to Greenfields to share their effective practice.

At the time of the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers challenge the most able pupils and provide pupils with opportunities for problem solving in mathematics. Leaders were asked to improve the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling, as well as to improve pupils' rates of attendance.

As we toured the school to see the learning that was taking place, it was clear that teachers ask very well-considered questions to challenge pupils' thinking and encourage them to explain their answers. Books show that teachers plan learning that will challenge pupils' thinking in all subjects. During the inspection, pupils demonstrated their very positive attitudes to learning by telling me that it is important to try the challenges that teachers provide because it will help them in future learning.

Leaders have introduced an approach to teaching mathematics that develops pupils' fluency in calculation and deepens their understanding of mathematical concepts. Leaders have provided teachers with important training to ensure that this approach is applied across the school. Our visits to mathematics lessons showed that teachers follow the school's approach consistently well. They provide clear explanations and use their strong subject knowledge to explain new ideas and link them to pupils' prior learning. Pupils' books also show that teachers plan frequent opportunities for pupils to apply their learning in mathematics to problem solving and investigations that build on current or previous learning. In 2017 and 2018, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in mathematics by the end of Year 6 was higher than that seen nationally.

Since the last inspection, leaders have refined the school's approach to teaching grammar, punctuation and spelling. These important skills are taught regularly throughout the school. Books show that pupils use the skills they have learned in their writing. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard and higher standard in spelling, punctuation and grammar rose from 2017 to 2018.

Leaders encourage staff at all levels to engage in continuing professional development. They are outward looking in their approach, visiting schools locally and further afield to seek out highly effective practice to bring back to Greenfields. Staff engage well with this. They frequently offer 'masterclasses' to their colleagues. In these sessions, teachers who have specific strengths in their teaching organise demonstration lessons so that their colleagues can learn from their effective practice. These masterclasses, for example in phonics, providing challenge in mathematics or in the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar, take place during lunchtimes so that staff can attend. The highly reflective leadership team, not willing to rest on its successes in developing the quality of teaching and learning, is trialling further ways to share each other's effective practice. For

example, leaders video their own teaching to share with colleagues for discussion. This is a further example of leaders and staff engaging with the culture of learning and high aspirations for all at the school.

Leaders, supported by the trust, provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to extend their learning beyond the classroom. Pupils can attend a wide variety of clubs after school, such as those for fencing, cookery, creative writing, knitting, football and netball, to name but a few. The trophy cabinet in the corridor proudly displays the spoils of the sporting success that pupils have enjoyed. The trust organises annual competitions, such as the Summer Cup and inter-school competition, for pupils to participate in large-scale events against peers from other schools in the trust. Visits from Paralympic athletes to the school have been particularly well received by pupils, who were keen to talk to me about how inspired they have been by these athletes. One pupil summed up the views of many by saying, 'They taught me never to give up on my dreams.'

Typically, pupils make strong progress from their often low starting points. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development has risen steadily over recent years, so that it is now broadly in line with the national average. This trend of improvement has also been seen in the Year 1 phonics check, where the proportion of pupils achieving this milestone is also in line with the national average. By the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard is close to that seen nationally overall, but is slightly lower for disadvantaged pupils. By the end of 2018, a higher proportion of pupils in Year 6 attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics than was seen nationally. In the same year, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils attaining the expected standards in each of reading, writing and mathematics exceeded that seen by their peers nationally. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standard in mathematics fell in 2018, and no disadvantaged pupils reached this high standard in 2018.

Parents, almost without exception, speak very highly of the school. They were keen to tell me that their children are safe and well cared for in school and that they do well in their learning. Parents were also keen to explain that leaders provide valuable support for the whole family when it is needed. Parents are welcome to attend a variety of sessions provided at school that will help them at home, such as on cooking or solutions to children's sleeping problems.

Pupils behave very well in school. They talk respectfully of those whose beliefs or home life may be different from their own. They respond very well to instructions given to them by an adult because adults have established clear routines and high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Typically, pupils participate enthusiastically in their lessons and say that they enjoy their learning. Pupils are polite and move around school between lessons sensibly. The school provides a calm, caring and purposeful atmosphere in which pupils can learn.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that arrangements for safeguarding are fit for purpose. All the necessary vetting checks take place before staff and volunteers begin working at the school. Staff receive up-to-date training. They are fully aware of the signs of potential abuse and how to report a concern about a pupil's welfare, should one arise. Leaders ensure that records are very well kept.

The designated senior leaders for safeguarding are ably supported by the family support workers to ensure that pupils and their families have access to support at an early stage, if they will benefit from it. Some of this support is provided through the strong links staff have forged with external agencies, and some is provided by staff in school who work closely with families who may be facing difficult circumstances.

Pupils speak knowledgably about how to keep themselves safe when they use modern technology. They are taught about road safety, fire safety and stranger danger. Pupils told me that bullying hardly ever happens at their school, but that if it ever did, an adult would deal with it successfully for them.

Inspection findings

- The progress pupils make by the end of Year 6 in writing has been above average, and often well above average, for three consecutive years. At the end of 2018, there was an uncharacteristic dip in the progress pupils made in reading and mathematics. This means that pupils made progress that was broadly in line with that of their peers nationally instead of well above the national average as was seen in both 2016 and 2017. Leaders wasted no time in analysing why this happened. They have responded swiftly, undertaking a detailed evaluation of what pupils know, understand and can do. If it is appropriate, pupils, including the most able, receive additional support so that they can have the chance to excel. Pupils' mathematics books show the strong progress they are making in relation to their starting points. Leaders have provided training for teachers to improve the teaching of reading. Teachers ask carefully targeted questions in reading lessons to develop pupils' inference skills.
- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent well. In 2017, the school received the accolade of East Midlands regional winners for the effective spending of this funding in the national Pupil Premium Awards. Leaders consider carefully the barriers to learning that are faced by the pupils entitled to benefit from this funding. They ensure that pupils can access the same breadth of opportunities, such as trips or music lessons, as their peers.
- This year, recognising that some disadvantaged pupils do not attend school regularly enough, leaders have dedicated some of the pupil premium funding to employing a member of staff who will keep an overview of the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have a clear approach to addressing low levels of attendance and celebrating high rates of attendance. However, despite leaders' efforts, a few pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, still do not attend school

regularly enough.

- Recently, in collaboration with the trust, leaders have reviewed the school's curriculum. They have introduced a 'core knowledge curriculum' across all subjects. This means that learning is carefully sequenced across the school in each subject. Teachers are very clear what pupils in each year group will learn, including key vocabulary with which pupils will become familiar.
- Pupils' books show that pupils of all ages study a range of subjects in depth, enabling them to make progress and build up their knowledge and understanding of concepts. This was also demonstrated by pupils who were writing during an English lesson and who explained how they were using their knowledge from history lessons in their writing.
- The curriculum is supplemented by a raft of opportunities for pupils to broaden their horizons and raise their aspirations. The annual 'apprentice day' encourages pupils of all ages to learn about the opportunities that lie ahead of them in the world of work. Pupils can take part in Young Voices, which offers pupils the chance to sing as part of a mass choir. Other pupils participated in the Shakespeare Schools Festival. Pupils also benefit from opportunities to visit the theatre and to learn to play musical instruments, such as guitar, drums or the violin.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- work more extensively to improve the attendance of those few pupils who do not attend school regularly enough
- further refine their use of assessments of pupils' understanding in mathematics, so that more pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make the best possible progress and attain the high standards of which they are capable.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Di Mullan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, four other leaders and the family support workers. I spoke with two teachers who are new to the profession. I met with two representatives from the academy scrutiny committee and with the trust's director of primary education.

Together, the headteacher and I toured the school to see the learning taking place in every year group. We examined a range of pupils' books from across the school.

I considered the views of parents through the online survey, Parent View, and I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. I also read an email that was sent to me via the school office. There were no responses to the staff or pupil online survey, but I spoke with pupils in every class we visited and more formally with a group of six pupils representing key stages 1 and 2.

I scrutinised a range of school documentation, including a sample of minutes of governors' meetings, the school's self-evaluation, the academy improvement plan and the plans for the spending of the pupil premium funding. I also examined documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.