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Ms Amanda Dawson
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Dear Ms Dawson

Short inspection of Mellers Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 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 May 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 be a section 5 inspection.

You are determined to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress. Your commitment is infectious and you are supported by dedicated staff and members of the governing body. You have very high expectations of all staff and pupils. Leaders provide high-quality training for staff to support them in their roles. Staff readily take on additional responsibilities with understanding, and use this to fulfil their monitoring roles in supporting the learning and progress of all pupils.

Senior leaders and the governing body have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Your approach to school improvement is focused and based on innovative research. Staff feel particularly well supported in playing their part in school improvement and are encouraged to engage in research-led developments. Your work with external partners further strengthens school improvement.

Leaders and governors have addressed the areas for improvement that were identified at the school's last inspection. Attendance has risen to the national average. Leaders monitor attendance and follow up absence tenaciously. They employ effective processes to improve attendance. As a result, attendance has improved, with persistent absence now below the national average. You are also mindful of the impact that new pupils arriving at, and others leaving, the school have on attendance patterns.

Another area for improvement, highlighted by the previous inspection, related to the provision for the most able pupils in mathematics and their response to teacher guidance. Increased challenge and pupils' response to the guidance that is provided to improve their understanding are producing significant in-year progress for current pupils. However, the proportion of Year 6 pupils in 2018 who attained the higher standard was below the national average, with the most able pupils making average progress.

Your aspirational approach is inspiring pupils. They understand the part they play in their own development and how working hard can help them secure a successful future. One parent stated: 'Because of the ambitions staff instil, my daughter has already decided which university she wants to go to.' The pupils I spoke with have a very positive attitude to their learning. They also appreciate what the school provides in terms of the wider curriculum, including music, art and sporting activities. Pupils commented that they appreciated the range of after-school activities provided and the educational visits they attend. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards diversity and welcome new pupils with pride. One pupil commented: 'Mellers is a good school, because we have lots of friends and the teachers respect us.' New entrants are welcomed into a respectful, bright and attractive environment that supports good learning.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Parents I spoke with and those that expressed their views through the online parent survey Parent View confirmed that they believe their children make good progress and feel the staff keep their children safe. Parents also said their children enjoy coming to the school and that they are being well prepared for the next stages in their education through a good grounding in the core skills of reading, writing and mathematics. One parent stated: 'The teachers are with the children every step of the way and, because of this, they are flying!'

The governing body clearly understands its remit to improve outcomes consistently for pupils by providing challenge and support for leaders. Governors have formalised the way they monitor the school. They are provided with detailed information about areas for improvement and are well placed to hold leaders to account. Governors are proactive and are keen to develop their impact further and improve the school further.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, as the designated safeguarding lead, along with your well-trained team, have ensured that all safeguarding processes are fit for purpose. Detailed records of concerns are well maintained and managed. Records, such as those for attendance and behaviour, are regularly reviewed, and identified trends are swiftly acted upon. Staff at all levels and governors have received appropriate safeguarding training. This training has been tailored to reflect specific needs that have been identified at a local level. The additional training staff received to support families demonstrates a commitment to safeguarding the wider school community. You recognise the clear links between attendance and child safety, and the systems introduced since the last inspection have ensured improved attendance and safeguarding procedures.

Leaders have ensured that there are well-planned opportunities within the curriculum to support children in keeping themselves safe. Year 6 pupils I spoke with could clearly explain how to keep themselves safe online. You work in partnership with external agencies, and pupils value the visit from the local police. Pupils were positive about the role the school prefects play in supporting other pupils and they say that they feel safe, behaviour is good and bullying is rare.

The emphasis you place on pupils' social and emotional welfare is a strength of the school. You support pupils' emotional needs through the school's counselling service. The well-ordered and calm atmosphere reflects the school's consistent approaches to pupil well-being. This is having a positive impact on pupils' personal development.

Inspection findings

- Leadership at all levels is strong. Strategic planning is based on an accurate understanding of development priorities, thorough monitoring of the school's work and analysis of outcomes for pupils. The school's improvement plan is precise and is regularly reviewed and amended if needed. These considered actions have brought about improvements to all aspects of school life, since the last inspection.
- Pupils currently in key stage 2 are making good progress in all year groups. Over the past three years, the school has established a profile of increasingly strong progress in mathematics, reading and writing. Leaders have rightly prioritised the depth of learning for all abilities in order to increase the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard and greater depth. Improvements in teaching are having a significant impact on achieving this goal.
- Leaders make full use of the pupil premium to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make strong progress. Leaders have accurately identified barriers to learning and provided appropriate support to overcome these. Disadvantaged pupils currently in school make good progress, with high proportions achieving at the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2018, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made progress in line with other pupils nationally in writing and well above in reading and above in mathematics.

- In 2018, the progress made by pupils with English as an additional language at the end of Year 6 was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment at the expected standard and greater depth for this group of pupils was well above the national average in reading, above at the expected standard in writing and slightly below in mathematics.
- Provision in the early years prepares children very well for school life. Children start school with skills that are not as well developed as those typical for their age. The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was in line with the national average in both 2016 and 2017 although below in 2018. There is an effective mix of focused teaching and child-initiated activities which meets the needs of these children. Staff place great emphasis on ensuring that children's social and emotional needs are met and they are ready for Year 1.
- Pupils achieved well in the national phonics screening check, with outcomes in 2016 and 2017 being at the national average, although they were below it in 2018. Disadvantaged pupils performed equally well.
- Leaders have continued to strengthen teaching throughout key stage 1. The impact of their work can be seen in pupils' books and is reflected in the information the teachers collect about pupils' progress. The current Year 2 cohort is making rapid improvement and their work indicates that attainment, at the expected standard and at greater depth, is likely to be above average in all subjects, when compared with 2018 figures.
- Leaders have ensured that assessment systems are even more effective. They also ensure that pupils move from one year to the next seamlessly, so that prior learning can be built upon and that teaching precisely addresses pupils' needs.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvements in the quality of teaching, particularly at key stage 1, are closely monitored to make sure pupils make consistently strong progress and attainment continues to rise
- teachers plan work for the most able that will challenge them to reach the higher standard of attainment.

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

Yours sincerely

Ged Philbin
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you and senior leaders. I met with members of the governing body, subject leaders for English and Mathematics, Year 2 teaching staff, the school's assessment leader and administration staff. I met with a number of parents at the start of the school day. I met with staff in the school's breakfast club.

I considered parents' responses to Ofsted's online survey Parent View, and 19 free-text comments. I also scrutinised staff responses to the Ofsted online survey. We visited classes across the school together. I looked at a sample of pupils' work across all key stages, observed children at breaktime and met with a group of Year 6 pupils. I studied a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and the school improvement plan. I took into account a number of other key documents, including those related to the work of the governing body. Documents related to safeguarding were scrutinised, including the single central record. I reviewed information published on the school's website and evaluated the school's attendance information.