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Mr Neil Elson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Elson

### **Short inspection of Martinshaw Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 2 May 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 January 2016.

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

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

Through your focused leadership, you have continued developing the strengths of the school. With your new senior leadership team, you are driving improvements by evaluating the needs of the pupils and finding the best approaches to address priorities identified. You focus on the whole child and are determined to provide experiences to improve learning and life chances for all pupils. Creating opportunities to bring the curriculum to life so pupils understand their learning fully is central to your work. You have focused effectively on providing a wide range of enrichment activities, including yoga, where a range of pupils of different ages were observed calmly participating. Parents appreciate and recognise the hard work of the staff, with one stating, 'They do so much to enrich the learning experience.'

Pupils learn in a warm, well-cared-for and supportive environment. Pupils' work is displayed well to motivate, celebrate and further assist their learning. Their playground designs, an outside mural representing British values and the money that you trust pupils to use well during enterprise week are evidence that you value your pupils' ideas. This is resulting in most pupils being keen and active learners who behave well in and around school. They are polite, courteous and proud of the leadership responsibilities they hold, including as digital leaders or members of the school council. You are effectively developing a programme to further develop the pupils' skills of confidence, team work, positivity and perseverance. Parents are well

engaged in this and you know this will benefit the pupils' approach to challenges they may face in their lives.

Leaders are always aspiring to achieve better. You expect pupils to be challenged and to learn from their mistakes. Pupils know this and understand that making a mistake is helpful for them to learn and move on. The sensitivity and help they receive from staff are highly valued.

Governors are highly supportive of your leadership and rightly proud of improvements that have been made. They work effectively as a team. Your governors are not afraid to challenge and question decisions, holding you to account effectively. They have an accurate picture of the school and are clear of the priorities and direction for improvement.

Since the previous inspection, you have worked to improve the opportunities for writing, particularly for most-able pupils. Leaders have implemented a 'novel approach' to inspire learning. This is evident in classrooms and in pupils' books. Pupils in Year 2 reported how much they are loving learning about Julia Donaldson.

Writing has been closely linked to cross-curriculum learning. A good example of this was observed in Year 6, where pupils were observed writing following a video clip based on World War 2. Clear success strategies are communicated to the pupils so they know what to do to improve their written work. Year 4 pupils confidently explained what they should include in their autobiographies due to the expert sequencing of skills they had learned prior to writing independently.

Stronger checks on pupils' progress include the use of standardised assessments and regular moderation of work with other schools, to ensure the assessments are accurate. You and senior leaders monitor pupils' work closely, using a range of approaches, including talking to the pupils about their work.

Subject leadership has been strengthened. Time has been allocated to allow for monitoring and evaluation in each subject to improve the quality of teaching. Most subject leaders have become confident leaders with a secure understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in their subjects. Their next step is to ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills in their subjects are developed progressively as they move through the school.

Pupils' progress is monitored closely. This ensures that staff are aware of any underachievement and actions are agreed to help pupils make better progress. Staff have found this helpful. They know that they are supported by you and that you are available for advice and guidance to improve their own practice.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at Martinshaw Primary School. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements, including those related to recruitment, are fit for purpose. As the designated senior leader for safeguarding, you work diligently to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep

themselves safe. Pupils report that they feel safe because adults are always available to support and help them.

Parents recognise the importance you place on safeguarding. You have sought ways to engage and work with them to ensure that their children use the internet safely. Pastoral support for individuals has been provided to impact positively on both their mental and physical well-being. This was recognised by one parent as being instrumental in the development of her daughters.

Training of staff is regular and thorough. Leaders and governors monitor carefully the possible risks to pupils and act on them. The safeguarding governor is knowledgeable and ensures this aspect of the school's work is given high priority.

### **Inspection findings**

- Together with governors, you monitor attendance closely for groups of pupils and individuals. Liaison with parents of pupils causing concern is regular and is mostly effective. You are working diligently with some families to ensure that their children's achievement is not hampered by poor attendance. Currently, attendance is above the national average.
- The punctuality of pupils is carefully monitored. Your work with parents is having a positive impact on ensuring that most pupils attend school on time. You are determined to improve this further.
- Improving outcomes in mathematics is a priority for Martinshaw. To improve the quality of teaching in mathematics, staff have had opportunities to team teach, observe modelled lessons and work directly with the mathematics hub to increase subject knowledge. This has resulted in a greater consistency of approach.
- A new approach to the teaching of mathematics has been implemented this academic year. Strategies to increase opportunities to reason and solve problems have been effective. Additional challenges are planned, and pupils report that they are expected to 'prove and explain their answers' as well as 'investigate deeper.' The use and application of mathematical vocabulary has been developed well across the school. Pupils are being expected to use this independently. This was evident in the Reception class, where children were using the word 'minus'.
- Although pupils attain well in mathematics, and most make good progress, too few pupils reach greater depth by the end of key stage 1 and the higher standard by the end of key stage 2. Successfully embedding the new, mastery approach to teaching is a further next step for the school to address this relative weakness.
- Adult support is well targeted to promote the pupils' ability to work independently. Guidance and questioning are effective in allowing pupils to think for themselves. Feedback to pupils moves learning forward and often challenges pupils effectively to improve their work.
- Spelling has been successfully focused on to improve outcomes in writing. A new approach has been introduced in key stage 2 which is ensuring consistency of teaching and daily practice. This has been monitored effectively by the English leader. Staff training has also resulted in improved teaching and application of

grammar and punctuation skills. Writing books confirm that pupils are more accurately applying spelling, grammar and punctuation skills in their work than previously.

- Although you are proud of your curriculum, time restraints impact negatively on the coverage of some subjects. This hinders the progress that pupils make in some non-core subjects. Addressing this and providing a vibrant and well-sequenced curriculum is a further next step for the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the reasoning and mastery approaches are embedded in mathematics teaching to ensure that all pupils are challenged, particularly the most able
- leaders and middle leaders further develop a broad curriculum which sequences skills and knowledge, to ensure coverage and progression in each subject.

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

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Stirland  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, subject leaders for English and mathematics, the school office manager and five members of the governing body. I met with several parents at the start of the school day. I met with staff in the school's breakfast club. I had a discussion with a group of pupils. I spoke with staff to discuss their understanding and processes for safeguarding in the school.

I spoke to you about your self-evaluation and the school development plan. I held a telephone conversation with a local authority representative and considered a record of a visit from them, reviews from the East Midland Maths Hub South and the STEP teaching school alliance. I considered 35 parents' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 31 free-text comments. I scrutinised the 11 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. Together, we visited all classes across the school. With you and your assistant headteacher, I scrutinised a range of books from pupils of differing abilities. I reviewed a range of documentation, including those linked to safeguarding, action plans, attendance, school's current

performance, governor monitoring and internal monitoring. I reviewed information on the school's website.