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Mr Philip Gray
Long Meadow School
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Dear Mr Gray

Short inspection of Long Meadow School

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 the school was judged to be good in January 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

You lead a school that is ambitious for pupils, staff and the wider community. You have an accurate and well-considered view of the school's strengths and the aspects that require further work. As a result, the leadership team is working on the right areas for improvement. Staff value the training and guidance they receive and are proud to work at the school.

The school is a positive and welcoming place. Staff and pupils are friendly and supportive and demonstrate respect for each other. All members of the community are committed to living up to the school's vision of providing 'a caring and nurturing school that supports children in aiming to be the best they can be'. Pupils are proud of Long Meadow and appreciate the good learning opportunities they have. They describe their school as 'brilliant', 'awesome' and 'the best'.

Most parents and carers believe the school is well led and managed. 'Positive', 'amazing' and 'supportive' were words used in parents' free-text comments to describe the school. One parent commented: 'I love the school and teachers at Long Meadow, and I am very happy with the current team leading the school.'

At the time of the last inspection, inspectors highlighted good teaching, the strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the effective curriculum. These aspects of the school remain strong. Inspectors asked leaders to improve the quality

of pupils' handwriting and spelling. Writing in current pupils' books confirms that this aspect of teaching has been developed well. Pupils have improved their handwriting and spelling. In addition, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the 2017 key stage 2 grammar, punctuation and spelling assessment was in line with the national average. The school's own assessments and the 2018 outcomes indicate that work on this aspect has continued to have a positive impact. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard is now well above the national average.

You and the leadership team are skilled at identifying how to improve pupils' progress. Overall, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics but there is inconsistency in how teachers challenge the most able pupils. You have rightly identified that teachers need to provide more challenge and have higher expectations of the most able in mathematics so that they make more progress. You have introduced a new way of assessing and tracking pupils' progress. However, this is not yet fully embedded. You acknowledge that the assessments made by some teachers are not as accurate as they need to be. As a result, the school's assessment information does not provide a sharp enough overview of pupils' learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, have established a strong safeguarding culture in which pupils' safety is given the highest priority. Staff are appropriately trained in, understand and diligently carry out their safeguarding responsibilities. The school has developed effective systems to protect and support all pupils. Robust procedures ensure that all the statutory recruitment checks have been completed for adults working in school. Effective relationships with external agencies ensure that vulnerable pupils receive appropriate and timely help and are well supported.

Parents and staff who completed Ofsted's online questionnaires stated, without exception, that pupils are safe at this school. Almost all pupils say they feel safe and enjoy their learning. Pupils I spoke with confidently described the range of strategies they use to stay safe. For example, they knew how to stay safe when using the internet. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils at Long Meadow flourish and enjoy learning with each other because of the high-quality pastoral care they receive. One pupil told me, 'If you have a problem, the teachers always sort it out.'

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I evaluated: the effectiveness of safeguarding; the teaching of reading in key stage 1; the progress that pupils make in writing, particularly boys and disadvantaged pupils; and how effectively the most able pupils are challenged in mathematics.
- The school rightly focused on improving pupils' outcomes in writing in the last academic year. In the outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2017, the proportions of pupils who had made expected progress and better-than-expected

progress in writing had improved from the previous year and were above the national averages. However, leaders identified a significant gap between the progress rate of boys and that of girls. While girls' progress was well above average, boys' progress was in line with the national average. Leaders quickly implemented changes to develop the teaching of writing by introducing more boy-friendly topics, as well as more high-quality reading books. The books of current pupils and the school's own assessments show that you have addressed this progress gap, as boys are now achieving as well as girls in writing.

- Disadvantaged pupils are achieving well. Leaders have established a clear approach to ensure that the help given to improve pupils' writing has a sharp focus. This has developed the skills and confidence of disadvantaged pupils. For example, one-to-one support in lessons has enabled pupils to rapidly improve their literacy skills. This support in lessons has been effective in building pupils' independence and helped them to become good learners. In the assessments at the end of key stage 2 in 2017, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils making good progress in writing was in line with the national average. This was a marked improvement on the previous year, when disadvantaged pupils' progress in writing was well below average. This stronger progress in writing was maintained in 2018.
- I looked at how the school has developed reading in key stage 1. Leaders have introduced a range of strategies to improve pupils' spelling and comprehension skills. Some of these developments are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. However, you have identified that there are some inconsistencies in the quality of phonics teaching and this is having an impact on pupils' outcomes in reading. You have clear plans in place to improve the quality of phonics teaching and to strengthen pupils' phonics skills.
- Overall, pupils make good progress in mathematics. Following the drop in results in 2016, leaders introduced changes to improve the teaching of mathematics. Where teachers have effectively implemented these, the most able pupils are making stronger progress. However, these improvements in teaching are not yet consistent across the school. You acknowledge that further work is needed to ensure that the progress of the most able pupils is stronger.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils consistently tackle work in mathematics that challenges them
- the teaching of phonics at key stage 1 is consistently strong
- teachers' assessment is strengthened so that it provides an accurate view of pupils' progress.

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

Yours sincerely

David Harris
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Meetings were held with you, the interim deputy headteacher and several members of staff. We discussed improvements since the last inspection. I visited classrooms with you to observe pupils' learning and look at pupils' work. I had a telephone conversation with two governors, including the chair of the governing body.

I looked at a range of documentation, including: information about the work of governors; information on safeguarding, attendance and behaviour; published performance information; and the school's self-evaluation. I also looked at the school's website in preparing for this inspection. I took account of 42 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 22 free-text comments. I also considered 41 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 93 responses to the pupil questionnaire.