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Mrs Josephine Simmons
Headteacher
The Meadows Primary School
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Dear Mrs Simmons

Short inspection of The Meadows Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 March 2017, 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

Along with senior leaders and governors, you have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There is a constant drive to ensure that all pupils achieve the highest standards of which they are capable. Actions taken to improve outcomes for pupils are appropriate and have resulted in a nurturing and inclusive school ethos in which children want to succeed.

You have correctly identified progress and attainment weaknesses in reading and mathematics in the 2016 published outcomes for key stage 2 and have put effective strategies in place to address them. Lesson observations, analysis of attainment information and pupils' work demonstrate that an increasing proportion of pupils are now reaching the expected standards. You are keen to improve rates of progress and attainment still further.

Pupils speak positively about the school and express confidence in the adults that they work with. They respect each other's views and describe how they welcome new people to the school. One child told me, 'We welcome everyone and do our best to look after them, no matter where they're from.' Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the school's marking and behaviour policies and value the rewards that are available to them. They show positive engagement in lessons and work collaboratively, using the school's 'Good Mathematical Communication' approach well.

Partnership with parents is a strength of the school. The 'Shared Learning' event that took place during my visit demonstrated that pupils and their families enjoy sharing learning. The task of creating a device to protect eggs when dropped saw pupils and adults working collaboratively, resulting in a strong sense of community cohesion.

The school is fully inclusive. There are a high number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Due to a comprehensive understanding of their needs, the provision they receive ensures that these pupils achieve well.

Governors, including many who are relatively new, are passionate about improving outcomes for pupils and are highly aspirational. They provide senior leaders with an increasing level of challenge and ensure that their statutory duties are fulfilled. They have a strong understanding of safeguarding and ensure that senior leaders execute their duties in this area effectively. They recognise that there is more to be done to strengthen some of the systems that help them to keep track of the success of the school's work; for example, how well the pupil premium is spent to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and the checks on the performance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils' work and their engagement in lessons demonstrate that disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress. These pupils are well supported by the school's nurturing ethos and by additional teaching assistants who are well trained in supporting them. Some of these pupils also receive additional help from the school's family support worker; parents say they value this highly. High absence rates for this group of pupils have declined, but absence still remains higher than average; this continues to be a focus for you.

You have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The increased use of physical resources and the 'Good Mathematical Communication' approach has resulted in mathematics being more interesting for pupils; they are engaged and show enjoyment in the subject. The quality of teaching in the school has been maintained and a high number of new staff since the last inspection have been well inducted and supported in improving their teaching. However, challenge for the most able pupils does not always match the standards of which they are capable.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are robust and that records are detailed and of high quality. Safeguarding concerns are addressed in a timely manner and support, where needed, is quickly put in place. The family support worker provides effective help to pupils and their families in order to ensure that any minor safeguarding concerns are addressed at an early stage.

Children say that they feel safe and know who to speak to if they have any concerns. They have a strong understanding of how to stay safe online and know what steps to take if they feel at risk.

Attendance of all pupils is monitored carefully and swift action is taken in the event of high absence. Case studies demonstrate that the school's actions have resulted in significant improvements in this area. However, national benchmarks are not being used effectively to evaluate the absence of particular groups of pupils.

Inspection findings

- You have recognised the dip in outcomes in mathematics in 2016 and are taking appropriate steps to address this. Teaching assistants have undertaken training and are now more skilled in supporting teaching, learning and progress in mathematics. Pupils actively engage in discussion about their mathematical learning and are beginning to select and use more complex mathematical vocabulary. Pupils are making good progress and this is evident in their books.
- Children are given, and respond to, next steps in learning in a way which is consistent with the school's policy. However, teachers are inconsistent in the expectations they set for pupils. Some teachers are precise and set the right level of challenge for pupils, which results in pupils doing well. Other teachers lack clarity in what they ask pupils to do, which does little to extend pupils' learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils now make at least good, and in some cases rapid, progress. An increasing number of disadvantaged pupils are achieving what is expected of them for their age. Interventions are appropriate and enable these pupils to be ready for learning. Inspection evidence confirms that the family support worker and teaching assistants contribute well to improved attendance for this group, and to an inclusive and nurturing environment in which disadvantaged pupils feel valued and eager to engage.
- The governing body has correctly identified the need to increase accountability for the spending of pupil premium funding. Current tracking of disadvantaged pupils focuses primarily on attainment and not clearly enough on progress from individual starting points. Additionally, the pupil premium strategy does not set out how each funded action will be evaluated for impact. This means that it is difficult to review the effectiveness of specific actions and for governors to hold senior leaders to account.
- The absence rates of all pupils are closely monitored. A progressive set of actions is implemented where absence is high, including letters, advice and incentives. The family support worker provides support in developing routines where early help is required. However, published information is not being used effectively to fully evaluate the absence levels of all groups in relation to national standards. The absence rate of disadvantaged pupils has declined since 2016 and is no longer among the highest 10% nationally. However, absence for this group of pupils remains above average.
- Leaders have created a culture where pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are valued, nurtured and included in all that the school has to offer. Absence levels for this group are high, but this is chiefly due to the complex medical needs of several pupils on roll. Pupils who have special

educational needs and/or disabilities receive comprehensive provision and make good progress. However, this group of pupils is being monitored solely in terms of their attainment. The progress they make from their individual starting points is not being evaluated effectively.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- rates of progress and attainment in mathematics and reading continue to increase to be at least in line with those found nationally
- the pupil premium strategy is strengthened so that the impact of each initiative can be measured and evaluated and used by the governing body to hold leaders rigorously to account
- the most able pupils are consistently challenged with work that matches their ability
- the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is tracked
- effective systems for checking on the absence of groups of pupils are introduced and the absence levels of disadvantaged pupils are reduced.

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

Yours sincerely

Victor Wilkinson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and we shared the school's self-evaluation and agreed my key lines of enquiry for the inspection. I also met with the school leaders responsible for pupil premium, absence, exclusion and special educational needs and/or disabilities. I met with five governors, pupils from Year 6 and parents at the start of the school day. I considered the responses of parents made to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. We visited all classes in the school together, spending a short time in each. We looked at a sample of pupils' work together. I viewed a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan, the single central record, governor documentation and behaviour logs.