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Mrs Jacqueline Underwood
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Underwood

Short inspection of Meadowcroft Community Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 13 December 2016, 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 November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

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

During the five years since your previous inspection, you have developed a team that enjoy working together to achieve the best for the pupils and families of Meadowcroft. You have maintained and improved the standards to which the school has now become accustomed at the end of key stage 1. In 2016 you also ensured that Year 2 pupils met the new higher expectations of the national curriculum. Furthermore, you have improved outcomes at the end of the early years, because of effective teaching.

This has all been done without losing the family feel of the school that parents value so much. As one parent wrote, 'The school is like a big family; everyone knows everyone and looks out for everyone. My child has grown in confidence since starting at Meadowcroft and I'm over the moon with my choice of school.' Parents are unanimously positive about every aspect of the school and use words such as 'brilliant', 'amazing', 'fantastic' and 'fabulous' to describe it.

Around the school, and in classrooms, pupils care about and look out for each other. They are polite and friendly and enjoy talking about their learning. Parents of pupils who join the school late, sometimes with very little English, are positive about the welcome they receive. This view clearly illustrates the way your pupils and staff demonstrate the values of tolerance and respect.

You have implemented a new assessment and tracking system that allows you to see how well pupils are progressing. You have refined its use to improve the information you can share with governors. This allows governors and other leaders to ask pertinent questions about what more could be achieved. Teachers are growing in confidence when using the information the system provides to help them plan appropriate next steps in learning. However, you and your team are aware that there is more work to do to sharpen how effectively the system is used in order to ensure that pupils regularly receive more challenging tasks.

At the time of the previous inspection you were asked to strengthen the work of subject leaders. Current subject leaders have received suitable training to help them carry out their roles. Within such a small school, they understand what is happening in other classes by holding conversations with their peers. Although some more formal observations take place, they are not yet rigorous enough to demonstrate that subject leaders are helping to raise standards beyond their own classrooms.

Your decision to appoint a new leader with responsibility for the learning of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been a success. The appointment has strengthened the school's leadership and ensures that you have a colleague with whom to share discussions and expertise. As a result, there is a clear focus on the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are disadvantaged.

Your regular work with a collaboration of local schools allows you to evaluate the effectiveness of the school more robustly. Staff are able to broaden their horizons and share training and expertise across schools.

Your self-evaluation is accurate and you know the aspects of the school's work that need further improvement. You and your governors are passionate about what you do and plan to keep 'doing things the same way but better' to secure the school's future success.

You are well supported by your governing body. Governors have ensured that the school's finances have been well managed – making difficult decisions about staffing when necessary. Governors ask challenging questions about the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They visit the school to see the impact that the support for these pupils is having. The governors are aspirational for pupils to leave Meadowcroft as self-assured and confident pupils ready for the next stage of their education. You and your team ensure that this happens.

Safeguarding is effective.

Procedures to check the recruitment of staff and volunteers are robust. Training for those responsible for safeguarding and for all staff is relevant and regular. You have created a culture of cautionary vigilance within the school. Staff are very aware of their responsibilities around safeguarding. There is no complacency when it comes

to ensuring that pupils are safe. The fact that you know your pupils and families so well helps this.

When you do need to work with other professionals to support vulnerable families, this is done sensitively and in the best interests of the child. You fulfil your statutory duties but agree that some of your record-keeping could be improved.

Parents and staff who completed online surveys during the inspection unanimously agreed that pupils are safe at this school. Pupils told me that Meadowcroft is a safe place. They play well together and know about potential risks around the school. For example, they told me they are not allowed on the climbing equipment in the rain because it could be slippery.

Inspection findings

- The proportion of pupils reaching the new challenging expected standard at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 was in line with national averages in reading and mathematics and higher than found nationally in writing.
- The proportion of pupils demonstrating a 'greater depth' of ability in reading and writing and mathematics was above that found nationally, showing that the most able pupils are challenged well.
- Pupils that left the school in 2016 had made good progress from their starting points through key stage 1. Some had made accelerated progress to show they were learning at a 'greater depth'.
- Pupils' phonics skills are developed and applied effectively throughout the school. Adults, including teaching assistants, model the correct use of phonics well. This helps pupils to feel confident when trying to spell words accurately in their own writing.
- Teachers help pupils to develop appropriate skills as readers. However, you recognise that more could be done to promote pupils reading a wider range of material, including for pleasure, at both school and home.
- You know the relatively few disadvantaged pupils well. They receive appropriate and well-delivered interventions where required to help them to make progress. Despite this, there are still some disadvantaged pupils, including some who also have special educational needs and/or disabilities that are not yet making enough progress to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- The pupil premium report on the school website does not outline the barriers to learning for these few disadvantaged pupils. Nor does it evaluate the impact of funding from previous years, although this is information you have in school.
- Sometimes, the resources that teachers use in subjects other than English discourage pupils from writing at length. The sheets that pupils are asked to complete restrict the most able pupils to writing one sentence, when they are capable and keen to write much more.
- Since the previous inspection, the leader responsible for mathematics has helped develop the curriculum. It now encourages pupils to improve and apply their mathematical skills. There is growing evidence of pupils successfully solving

mathematical reasoning problems in key stage 1.

- Teachers help pupils to develop and deepen their mathematical skills and knowledge well, sometimes using practical equipment and visual representations. However, they need to be sure that they are building on previous learning from the early years, especially for the most able children.
- Children settle into school life in the Reception class well. One parent commented about how her daughter had 'flourished' since starting school, while another parent praised how quickly their child had learned to read.
- Children make good progress from broadly typical starting points in the early years. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has increased in recent years and is above that found nationally. An increasing number of children are exceeding the early learning goals, especially in the specific areas of literacy and mathematics.
- Children in the Reception class are confident and comfortable in their routines. Their personal, social and emotional development is good. The curriculum is interesting and children's skills are developed well.
- Boys' attainment in writing in the early years, while above the national average, remains considerably lower than girls', despite them making similar progress from their starting points.
- The curriculum includes a wide range of experiences across subjects that pupils find interesting. Art, physical education and making effective use of the sports grant are particular strengths. Visits, such as one to the National Gallery in London, help pupils to develop and deepen their understanding of what they learn in class.
- Over time, attendance has been broadly average. Absence is tracked carefully and actions are taken when attendance drops below expected levels. There are clear examples of where these actions have led to improved attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching improves further so that it enables all groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to make rapid progress from their starting points
- assessment information is used precisely and consistently well to plan the next steps of learning for all groups of pupils
- opportunities for leaders and teachers to observe and share best practice within the school and across wider collaborations are maximised
- pupils are enabled to write at length in other areas of the curriculum when it is appropriate
- pupils, including the most able, are encouraged to develop and share a love of reading and read a wide range of texts.

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

Yours sincerely

Lee Selby
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, I met with you and the inclusion manager on a number of occasions throughout the day to discuss various aspects of the school's work. Together, we carried out two learning walks where we visited each class. On the second learning walk, the inclusion manager joined us and we focused on the progress of different groups of pupils. I met with a group of teachers to look at a range of pupils' work across the curriculum. I heard four pupils from Year 2 read, including the most able. I met with the chair of the governing body and another governor and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I scrutinised the school's checks on recruitment and other safeguarding documentation. To gain their views of the school, I spoke to pupils in classrooms and on the playground at lunchtime. I spoke to a number of parents before school and considered 30 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, including 22 free text comments. I considered 15 responses to the confidential staff questionnaire. I looked at school documentation relating to early years outcomes, attendance and governance.

Throughout the inspection I focused on how leaders and governors ensured that different groups of pupils make good progress, the curriculum in mathematics, the early years provision and how the school keeps pupils safe and encourages them to attend school regularly.