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Mrs Christine Watkins  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Watkins

### **Short inspection of Duffield the Meadows Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 January 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 February 2012.

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

You have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have established a vibrant learning community within an orderly and well-organised school. The pupils and the staff are justifiably proud of the school, and parents are, justifiably and predominantly, very satisfied with the school.

You have struck a good balance between taking a caring and nurturing approach and enabling the pupils to reach the high standards of which they are capable. The pupils respond very well to the teaching. They told me that what they like about the teaching is that the learning, as one put it, 'sticks in your mind very easily'.

The pupils are very engaging, very polite and enjoy very much engaging in discussions on a wide variety of subjects. They have very positive attitudes to learning. Those attitudes are reflected in the good level of care and attention with which they do the work that they are given and in their general demeanour and excellent conduct around the school and in lessons. The pupils are helped to grow as thoughtful, considerate and well-adjusted young people.

The pupils have many opportunities to develop leadership skills and to undertake positions of responsibility. They spoke to me unassumingly but with clear conviction about the school parliament and being ministers for that parliament, as well as acting as team captains and 'peer buddies', all of which so obviously gave them an understanding of democracy and social responsibility. The pupils demonstrate pride in and commitment to those roles.

You have dealt effectively with areas for improvement from the last inspection. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 3+ in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 is typically above average and often significantly so. The pupils now have a good range of opportunities to write at length in different subjects and for various purposes. You have improved the school's use of assessment information, so that you have been able astutely to identify further improvements that you wish to make, notably with regard to the progress of the most-able pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and of pupils who enter the school at times different from the usual ones.

The work that you have undertaken to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium has been helpful and has ensured that there are not major differences between the achievement of these pupils and that of others, although there are still some. You have, however, largely responded and reacted to needs, rather than taking a systematic approach based on ensuring the most effective use of the funding possible.

The positive ethos of the school and the socially responsible attitudes that it helps to promote in the pupils are apparent, for example in the welcome that pupils provide to the higher-than-usual proportion of children who join the school at unusual times. The newly arrived pupils are helped to settle into the school quickly and some of the parents of these pupils commented to me about that particularly.

You have nevertheless, rightly, identified pupils who join the school at those times as a group deserving closer attention in your evaluations of how much progress the pupils are making. Currently, you do not have a clear view of whether these pupils make as much progress as they need to, compared with other groups, or not.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school's policies and practices for safeguarding pupils are fit for purpose. The governing body carries out an audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements annually, including checking that staff training is up to date, which helps to ensure that you remain alert.

You have put in place clear and straightforward procedures for staff to record and report any concerns that they may have. The staff know and understand those procedures. Your records show that, on the rare occasions when staff have had any concerns, they have used the procedures properly. You have made sure that there are good back-up systems for when key personnel are not in school.

The pupils feel safe at the school and some say so emphatically. For example, one told me that, 'The teachers make you feel safe'. The opportunities that they are given to learn about how to keep themselves safe in a range of circumstances and contexts, such as when using social media and texting, have a positive effect. The pupils demonstrate good knowledge of potential risks and how to deal with them. They understand the contribution made to personal safety and to feeling safe at the school by things such as the 'friendship bench' and the 'peace corner' in the playground.

Parents regard their children as being safe at the school and say that their children are cared for well; a high proportion of those parents who made their views known during the inspection say so as emphatically as some of the pupils. Attendance is better than average and persistent absence has declined in each of the last two years, with very notable improvements in this respect for pupils from disadvantaged groups, so that there was none at all in 2015.

### **Inspection findings**

- You have developed an effective and cohesive leadership team.
- You have successfully engaged the staff in a process for continuously improving the school. As one of your colleagues said to me, with the agreement of others, 'We don't let the grass grow'. The staff feel empowered and trusted to research, to investigate and to try out new things, but they know as well that they will be required to account for what they do.
- The governing body is appropriately questioning about the work of the school. It has, for example, supported you in raising the priority given by the school to its work in supporting pupils eligible for the pupil premium. Senior leaders know and are influenced in their work by the fact that the governing body now demands regular and frequent reports in detail about the progress with and impact of the work.
- Typically, pupils' achievement is above average in all key stages, including the early years, and often significantly so. The proportions of pupils making better than expected progress in the Key Stage 2 tests are also usually at least average and often notably above. The exception was in 2015 in writing, and you have identified and responded quickly to that issue.
- The classrooms are orderly and productive environments.
- The teachers have high expectations about things such as the level of vocabulary and language that pupils should use. Pupils take the challenges that they are given on board and that is reflected, for example, in the very good written work that they produce.
- Children in the early years make good and sometimes impressive gains with their writing. They are helped to move on quickly but appropriately to writing with increasingly less guidance until all that they require are lines on a page.
- I observed a number of occasions when pupils were expected to use quite sophisticated vocabulary and language, both orally and in their writing, including in the early years.

- In one example, the teacher prompted the pupils constantly to think about the words that they were using, asking, 'What's wrong with these adjectives?' and 'In what way?', persisting until it was clear that the pupils understood. Consequently, the pupils relish words, often taking opportunities to use as wide a variety as possible. For example, one Year 3 pupil wrote, 'In the rainforest, it was dark, gloomy, scary, terrifying and spooky!'
- You have introduced a systematic, well-structured and carefully thought-out approach to improving pupils' writing skills in Key Stage 2. Based on the idea of a writing workshop, pupils are required to think carefully and to work systematically through the sequence 'draft, edit, publish'. The approach leads to secure and evident improvements in pupils' work.
- The approach is being used consistently throughout Key Stage 2, which means that the pupils are able to build securely on each phase of their learning.
- The approach to teaching writing includes providing pupils with precise comments and information, based on careful assessment, about the quality of their work. The subsequent improvements in the quality of pupils' writing are clear to see. Many of them produce writing of a high standard and in a range of subjects, including science, music and French.
- The pupils find many of the topics and subjects that they study stimulating. A child in the early years was eager to talk to me at length about what he had learned about dinosaurs and did so enthusiastically. Key Stage 2 pupils spoke with evident interest about a range of scientific experiments that they had undertaken, including investigating forces using 'egg parachutes' to look at air resistance, and studying the suspension of objects in water.
- The interventions aimed at enabling pupils eligible for the pupil premium to make greater progress are proving successful. In particular, they are increasing the motivation of the most-able pupils by making sure that the work they are given is suitably challenging. The pupils manifestly relished the challenge in a mathematics lesson, describing the task as difficult but 'really fun'. They were able to give detailed and complex accounts of how they tackled the problems.
- Pupils value the range of sports in which they can participate. They like the sense of competition; it brought quick and natural smiles to their faces when I discussed it with them.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the school develops and implements a more strategic approach to meeting the needs of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and that the funding is used to best effect
- the recent improvements in assessing and analysing the progress made by pupils joining the school at times different from the usual ones are extended, so that senior leaders and teaching staff are able to compare this group's progress with that of others and so ensure that the pupils concerned make the best progress possible.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher and senior leaders, representatives of the governing body, the senior leader responsible for the pupil premium, the English coordinator, the designated person responsible for safeguarding, a group of teaching staff, and a representative of the local authority. I made a series of visits to lessons jointly with the headteacher. I looked at some of the school's assessment information in relation to the progress of pupils and examined examples of pupils' work. I held a range of discussions with a wide variety of pupils, informally when observing breaktimes and during lessons, and formally with a group of pupils. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school at the start of the day, at breaktimes and during lessons. I met with parents at the beginning of the school day, looked at the views of parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and read a letter sent to me by a parent. I examined a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies, the latest achievement and attendance information for the school, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, and external reports on the quality of the school's work.