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Mrs Alexandra Lightbown
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Dear Mrs Lightbown

Short inspection of Manor Field Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 22 November 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 October 2011.

This school continues to be good.

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

The leadership team, ably led by you as a highly skilled headteacher, form an effective team. You work very well together and expect the best from yourselves, other staff and pupils. You and the team model by example, demonstrating the skills and behaviour you expect to see from all staff.

Since the previous inspection, the school has federated with a small school within the county. This has strengthened the school's leadership because it has provided opportunities for staff to develop their expertise, for example by working with key stage 2 pupils at the partner school, working with a wider range of staff and working in different school contexts.

You, together with the governors and staff, have ensured that leaders are highly reflective. You look closely at all aspects of the school's performance through careful and well-planned monitoring activities. You regularly check teaching formally and informally and provide incisive feedback to help teachers improve their practice. You meet with staff regularly to discuss the progress that pupils are making, looking at every individual as well as at groups of pupils, to identify what else can be put in place to support pupils. You ensure that all teachers look at pupils' work across different year groups to gain a shared understanding of whether pupils are reaching

expected standards. As a result, you have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement which are set out in the school's self-evaluation. Your plans for improvement are equally well constructed, ensuring that everyone knows what the school's priorities are and how these will be achieved within the current year. At the same time, you ensure that the school looks beyond its own context, and you draw on good practice from local schools and beyond to support the school in further improvement.

You have ensured that middle leaders are provided with support and training so that they can play an active role in school improvement. These leaders know what you expect of them, for example that they should create their own action plans and ensure that they are implemented. As a result, middle leaders are knowledgeable and competent in fulfilling their roles. Subject leaders spoken to during the inspection said that their professional development is well supported by you and that the support you provide helps them to get better at their jobs.

The school is highly inclusive because everyone shares your commitment to ensuring that all pupils enjoy school and experience success. This includes those pupils who spend time in the specialist behaviour unit attached to the school, who you make sure you get to know by visiting frequently.

Governors are highly supportive of you and of staff, trusting your very good judgement and acknowledging your skills. However, they still ask challenging questions, for example about the use of funding for additional teaching assistant hours, and visit the school often to witness first-hand some of the strategies for improvement that are discussed during governing body meetings. Governors have thought carefully about the next steps in the school's development. They have planned sensibly for the forthcoming academisation with the inclusion of an additional partner school. In doing so, they have discussed at length how leadership capacity can be maintained and grown so that Manor Field Infant and Nursery maintains its strengths while supporting this additional school in improving.

Pupils love their school. They told me that 'all the teachers are great.' Pupils enjoy their learning and spoke with enthusiasm about the many things they like about school such as the clubs provided, their exciting lessons and the grown-ups who help them when they need help. Pupils show respect for adults and for each other, knowing that everyone should be treated with respect. When talking about people from different backgrounds, cultures and faiths, pupils told me, 'It would be so boring if everyone is the same.'

Parents spoken to during the inspection were also highly complimentary about the school and its staff, commenting on how welcoming everyone is at the school. Parents said that staff work hard to help their children, including providing additional support when they have difficulties. The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire were also very pleased with the school. However, a small number of parents said that they would like more information about the progress the children make.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding has a high profile at Manor Fields Infant and Nursery School from the moment anyone enters the school. All visitors are carefully checked on entry and provided with safeguarding information. Notices around the school regularly remind all staff to watch out for any signs that may cause concern about a child's welfare or safety. Checks on staff and volunteers at the school are carried out rigorously and you double-check on a regular basis that everything is in order with regard to these checks.

Staff receive regular training in safeguarding. Staff told me that at every staff meeting, safeguarding is on the agenda so that any updates or information can be provided. You check that training has been effective by carrying out staff questionnaires regularly to check understanding. This means that everyone in school has a very good understanding of what to look out for and what to do if they have a concern about a child. Records of concerns for individual pupils are extremely well maintained. These records demonstrate the care that all adults show for pupils and that all concerns are followed up rigorously.

Inspection findings

- The previous inspection report identified the need to further improve pupils' writing. You have ensured that this has been effectively addressed. For example, you have provided staff training using expertise both from within the school and from outside. You have ensured that, from the Nursery onwards, teachers provide lots of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in speaking and listening to support their writing. You have reviewed the curriculum so that there are lots more opportunities for pupils to write for a real purpose, for example through writing about exciting events and science experiments.
- Teachers assess the progress that pupils are making in writing very carefully. This has a good impact, and subsequent work demonstrates improvements. For example, a teacher had asked a pupil to improve their use of adjectives, and work two days later demonstrated that the pupil had remembered to include these. As a result, pupils' work shows that they are making good progress in writing, some from low starting points. In 2016, the proportion of Year 2 pupils who achieved the expected standard in writing was in line with that found nationally. This was achieved with a cohort that included a number of pupils who had special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Much has been done to enhance and further improve provision in the Nursery and Reception classes. These now provide attractive and well-organised environments for children to learn. Teachers plan carefully for the needs of pupils in their classes and provide good opportunities for learning indoors and outdoors. Teachers have identified that developing speaking and listening skills is a priority for many children and so provide lots of talking tasks with good modelling of speaking by adults. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has increased. However, you recognise that boys still do not achieve as well as girls, particularly in reading and

writing, and that more needs to be done to address this.

- Reading has a high profile in the school, with attractive reading areas and a good range of books available in classes and in the library. Teachers plan their lessons around selected books, reading good-quality texts to pupils regularly, and use these as starting points and models for writing. As a result, pupils enjoy reading. Some of the most able readers were heard reading during the inspection. They demonstrated a high level of competency in reading and good ability to answer questions about the texts. Phonics is taught well so that most pupils quickly learn their sounds. However, although the proportion of pupils who reached the required standard in the Year 1 phonics check in 2016 rose, it was still below that found nationally. This was because some pupils, while they made good progress from low starting points, were not able to blend sounds well enough by the end of Year 1. You recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that all pupils reach the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress across the school because support for these pupils is carefully planned and well focused. You and other leaders recognise the need to meet pupils' academic needs and also their emotional needs and so plan accordingly. For example, music lessons are provided for disadvantaged pupils, which enrich their experiences of school and their enjoyment in learning so that they engage more readily with other lessons. The most able disadvantaged pupils have specific support provided for them, for example additional mathematics teaching with the mathematics subject leader. This is enabling these pupils to fulfil their potential.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because provision for these pupils is also very well planned. Leaders carefully check that additional support has a positive impact. The leader for special educational needs knows these pupils well, visiting them in lessons as well as checking on extra interventions to make sure that they are making good progress from their starting points.
- The curriculum is broad and interesting and planned according to the school's aims, 'SMILE' (Stimulating, Motivating, Improving, Learning and Enjoyment). Lots of varied opportunities for learning are provided, such as the recently held 'innovation week'. During this week, pupils had the opportunity to work with local businesses, designing, for example, a three-course meal. Events such as this are both enjoyable and educational because leaders plan carefully for all aspects of the curriculum. For the innovation week, for example, the mathematics leader provided a range of mathematical tasks for each class, to complement the other activities going on. Thus, pupils learned about areas such as weight, fractions and data handling within a meaningful context. Pupils spoke about events such as this with real enthusiasm.
- The regular curriculum is also enhanced by the use of quality texts and by practical activities. Pupils in Year 2, for example, make good progress in science because they have regular opportunities to explore and investigate scientific concepts. Plentiful opportunities are provided for pupils to engage in art, which a

number of pupils cited as their favourite lesson. High-quality art is displayed around the school, for example African sunsets made by colour mixing in the Reception classes. Leaders for subjects other than English and mathematics have just begun to introduce systems for recording the progress that pupils make in these subjects. Because these systems are new, they are not yet being used to clearly identify where progress is strongest and where further improvements could be made.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the achievement of boys by the end of the Reception Year improves, by adults intervening in and using their independent play as opportunities to develop literacy skills
- phonics outcomes continue to rise by ensuring that support for pupils at the early stages in reading is consistently effective in accelerating progress
- the school's assessment systems are used to further improve progress in subjects other than English and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Maria Curry
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the school's senior leaders. I met with the chair of governors and with a small number of pupils from Year 2. I heard a sample of pupils read. I scrutinised a range of documents, including information on pupils' progress, safeguarding, development planning and the school's self-evaluation. I visited classes and evaluated pupils' work. I evaluated the school's website and found it to meet requirements on the publication of specified information.

I focused particularly on how well writing and phonics are being taught, on the progress being made by disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and on pupils' progress in areas of the curriculum other than English and mathematics.