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Mr Bruce Dale  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Dale

### **Short inspection of Mendip Green Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 5 April 2017 with Paul Smith, Ofsted Inspector, 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 2013.

#### **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 by example. You carry out your work with vigour and great integrity. You have high expectations of yourself and expect the best from everyone around you. Other staff embody these same qualities because of your style of leadership. You lead with an unwavering moral purpose. You have developed a highly skilled leadership team that share your relentless drive for school improvement. Consequently, staff morale is high and subject knowledge strong. The school is a happy and exciting place to be.

Behind your gentle approach lies a steely determination to ensure that every pupil has a voice in this inclusive school. Parents recognise the lengths to which staff go to provide a welcoming school where children are well cared for and are motivated to be curious. 'A wonderful caring and nurturing school which brings out the best in every individual child' was typical of the many positive comments inspectors received from parents. Pupils say they enjoy school and find learning to be 'fun' and 'interesting'.

The school has undergone a number of changes since the previous inspection. Its status has changed from a first school to a primary school. The school is now much larger than the average primary school. You and your governing body have managed a multi-million pound enhancement to the school buildings. You confess that these changes have provided considerable challenge. In particular,

implementing a key stage 2 curriculum has not been without its pitfalls. However, you have remained resolute and have drawn on the expertise of colleagues in local schools and the local authority. Good teaching in Mendip Green Primary School inspires pupils to work hard and achieve well.

You know your school well and are candid about what needs to improve. Despite the school having many strengths, you are not complacent. This was your attitude at the time of the last inspection when you acted diligently to address the areas for improvement that emerged. Consequently, the most able pupils achieve well because teachers know them well and provide them with the challenge they need. However, you recognise that there is still more work to be done in supporting more pupils to achieve a high standard in mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The culture of safeguarding is strong. This is because you, your leaders, staff and governors give safeguarding the highest priority. Pupils are well prepared to face a wide range of situations they may encounter in the future, by having faith in themselves and the courage to 'not let anyone take their choices away'. You place great emphasis on pupils understanding the choices they have. The school's personal, social, health and economic education prepares pupils well so that they are able to make a valuable contribution to society. For example, inspectors observed pupils eloquently debating the pros and cons of age restrictions on internet games. Pupils demonstrated great respect for one another's views in this contentious debate.

You ensure that adequate checks are in place for staff and volunteers who work at the school. Governors are assiduous in following up this work. Your regular briefings to all staff are informative and timely. Records of training confirm that teachers are up to date with the most recent guidance to keep children safe. Staff take great care to identify and pass on any safeguarding concerns swiftly and records are maintained meticulously. Your family support workers work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils who may be at risk receive the care and support they need.

### **Inspection findings**

- My first line of enquiry focused on how effective leaders and governors are in meeting their statutory duties. Governors carefully monitor the expenditure of additional funding such as the pupil premium and special educational needs funding. They have a good understanding of national data that supports them in offering effective challenge. The difference between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and others nationally is diminishing. In fact, in 2016, more disadvantaged pupils in your school met the expected standard in phonics than others nationally. Disadvantaged pupils who are most able make at least good progress.
- Pupils in your hearing impaired resource base and in your 'nurture provision' make good and often exceptional progress from their different starting points.

Staff have a good understanding of pupils' particular medical and learning needs. They ensure that pupils have a seamless education moving between the resource base and mainstream classes. Consequently, pupils grow in confidence and skills. The curriculum the pupils experience is broad and purposeful. Pupils are empowered to achieve. Where pupils have particular talents in, for example, computing or gymnastics, you ensure these pupils have every opportunity to excel.

- Next, we looked at how effective subject leadership in English has been so that more pupils make good progress and achieve a high standard. Staff training on grammar and punctuation has resulted in much-improved outcomes for pupils. Similarly, a recent focus on the quality of pupils' handwriting has led to pupils developing a legible and fluent handwriting style, often beautifully presented. Workbooks and conversations with pupils clearly demonstrate the great pride they take in their writing.
- As a result of leaders' efforts, the progress of current pupils in key stage 2 is stronger than it has been in the past. Pupils are successfully developing the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin success in writing. The work of the most able pupils is characterised by fluent, sophisticated sentence structure and creative flair. Other pupils with different starting points are also making good progress. However, there are some pupils in the school who do not have the precise skills in spelling to match their level of creativity. You recognise that there is more work to be done in this area.
- The third line of enquiry focused on the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics in providing challenge for the most able mathematicians. In 2016, fewer pupils achieved the highest standard at the end of key stage 1 than those nationally. Current information shows an improving picture. The greater emphasis on developing pupils' mathematical reasoning and problem solving in mathematics is leading to improved standards for all. Children get off to a particularly strong start in the early years. Much of leaders' effort has been directed at ensuring those less able mathematicians catch up. This work has paid dividends. However, although the most able mathematicians continue to sustain their rates of progress, current outcomes across the school show that fewer middle-ability mathematicians go on to achieve a high standard.
- In 2016, girls achieved better than the boys in all areas but mathematics at the end of key stage 1. In addition, boys did not do as well as boys nationally. Leaders have successfully tackled this issue. The school's re-shaped curriculum engages boys more in reading and writing. A renewed focus on reading and development of the school library has re-ignited boys' interest in reading. Boys' reading and writing attainment has increased by up to 30% in some year groups. The gap between boys and girls has reduced and in some cases is non-existent. Work in books reflects a rich vocabulary, variety of sentence structure and thoughtful re-drafting. Boys say that they enjoy writing and this is apparent in the care they take.
- Finally, we evaluated the school's actions to improve pupils' attendance. Leaders have taken decisive action with parents to emphasise the importance of good attendance. This strategy has been effective in dramatically reducing the number

of pupils who are persistently absent from school. In particular, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils was well below that of others nationally. Their attendance is now better than the national average for other pupils. In addition to the very effective work, the school's breakfast club provision has been effective in encouraging punctual attendance. Nonetheless, despite your personalised support for families, you recognise the need to continue to focus on improving pupils' attendance.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils across the school develop greater accuracy in their spelling
- more middle-ability pupils achieve a high standard in mathematics
- pupils attend school more regularly.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracy Hannon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, the inspectors met with you and other leaders, including the deputy headteacher and your subject leaders for mathematics and English. Also, we spoke with teachers, support staff and pupils. I met with the chair of the governing body and had another meeting with a further four members of the governing body and a local authority representative. Both inspectors visited classrooms to carry out a learning walk, accompanied by senior leaders. We observed pupils' learning, looked at the work in their books and spoke to them about their progress. In addition, I evaluated the school's plans for improvement and its self-evaluation, together with records of monitoring of teaching and learning and minutes of the most recent governing body meetings. The inspectors carried out a full review of safeguarding, including an evaluation of the single central record, records of meetings with local agencies and staff training, recruitment and safeguarding policies and procedures. We took account of 79 responses to Ofsted's Parent View online questionnaire and further responses to the free-text service.