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Steven Williams
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Dear Mr Williams

Short inspection of Medway Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 June 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Governors appointed you in October 2016 after the school ended its hard federation with Sparkenhoe Primary School. You were previously the acting headteacher for 18 months and know the school well.

Medway Community Primary School is a larger than average-size primary school. It is a friendly, harmonious learning environment where pupils are well cared for. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and the vast majority of parents are supportive. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is high and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also high. Parents speak warmly of the work that leaders have done to improve the school. They also recognise the work that you do to meet the diverse needs of the community. They say that you have created a school that 'respects and welcomes different ethnicities'.

Your passion and commitment are driving the school's ambition to do the best for its pupils. The school's motto of 'Together we will succeed' reflects its highly inclusive culture, with all members of staff determined to ensure a good education for every pupil, irrespective of family background, ability or need.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are respectful and concentrate well in class. As one pupil said, 'This is a great school because we work well together. Like our

values say, "Together we achieve". Pupils value their learning and enrichment opportunities. For example, a recent visit to Stratford-Upon-Avon helped them to better understand their work about the life and works of William Shakespeare.

You encourage pupils to be active in the community through fundraising initiatives. Pupils were very proud of winning the 'Fairtrade Breakfast' competition. You have taught them to appreciate the importance of respecting others and of valuing diversity. As a result, in addition to leaving at the end of Year 6 with standards above that of other schools nationally, pupils are tolerant, reflective and communicate well.

You and your team have dealt effectively with the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. During their teaching, teachers consistently plan and check that lessons meet the needs of all pupils. Where additional support for pupils is needed it is provided promptly and effectively. More-able pupils are challenged appropriately and make good progress as a result. In 2016 the school was in the top 3% of schools in England in terms of the progress that pupils make between the end of key stage 1 and the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.

Children continue to do well in the early years. The indoor and outdoor areas are stimulating and engaging environments where children have numerous opportunities to develop their vocabulary, understanding of mathematics and social skills such as taking turns and sharing. Parents are appreciative of the opportunities they have to be involved in their children's education and are pleased with their progress. They particularly value the 'stay and play' sessions where they are taught specific skills by staff, to teach their children at home.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Staff prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education and to play a positive role in multicultural Britain. For example, pupils told the inspector in great detail how they had been learning about the process of democracy and the possible future consequences for the country of a 'hung parliament' or coalition government in the recent general election.

Members of the governing body have a wide range of suitable knowledge, skills and expertise. New members to the governing body have particularly benefited from effective training from the local authority. This enables them to carry out their roles and responsibilities well. Governors provide appropriate support and increasing levels of challenge to you and other leaders. They have a particular focus on disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Your records are detailed and thorough. Staff and governors receive frequent and up-to-date training. They know what to do to keep pupils safe. You work actively with external agencies and refer your concerns in a timely and robust manner. You make sure that staff are alert to any potential issues and that safeguarding pupils is

everyone's responsibility. The checks on staff's suitability to work with children are detailed and thorough.

Pupils say that they are safe in school. They are confident that bullying is rare and that staff deal with this well. Pupils receive and understand guidance on potential risks and how to stay safe in different situations. These include, for example, the risks associated with using social media, cycling and when crossing the road. Pupils know whom they can speak to in school if they have any concerns or worries. The vast majority of parents agree that their child feels safe in school.

Inspection findings

- Children join the school with knowledge and skills that are below those expected for their age, and well below in language and communication. Despite this, children make good progress as they move up the school. By the end of Year 6 their attainment is in line with or above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress that pupils make between the end of key stage 1 and the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is at least good. In 2016 the school was in the top 3% of schools in terms of this progress.
- High numbers of pupils join the school at different points throughout the year. These pupils often speak English as an additional language and some join school knowing no English at all. They receive intensive support so that by the end of Year 6 their attainment is at least in line with that of other pupils.
- You have modified the school's curriculum to meet the needs of all learners and raise standards. For example, extra time is given to developing oracy skills and literacy and numeracy when needed. More-able pupils, including more-able disadvantaged pupils, are appropriately challenged through high quality teaching. Pupils and parents also appreciate the extra teaching available at lunchtimes and after school. In addition, you have increased the number of educational trips and visits so that pupils have a better knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Pupils who spoke to me said that they 'really enjoyed the trip to Florence to experience the birthplace of culture' and opportunities to take part in sport, local walks, plays and workshops.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 was above the national average. You rightly identified that the below-average attainment of these pupils in spelling, punctuation and grammar was due to a lack of specific teaching in these areas. You took prompt action to address this through changes to the curriculum and improved teaching strategies.
- The proportion of children who leave early years with a good level of development is still below that of other pupils nationally. Nevertheless, good teaching and improved provision means that the number of children achieving a good level of development has risen in the last two years and continues to increase.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average

but is improving. You have identified that significant mobility of pupils is a barrier to attainment. You modified the English and mathematics curriculums to meet the needs of pupils better and to raise standards. As a result, reading is highly valued by pupils through new quality texts and pupils now practise their writing skills more in other areas of the curriculum. In mathematics, pupils are given frequent opportunities to practise problem-solving skills in different contexts. Pupils' books in Year 3 show that you provide appropriate support, especially to disadvantaged pupils, to enable them to catch up, which has been largely effective.

- You and your staff were disappointed with the 2016 results in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Results had been improving over the last three years but are still below national expectations. You identified that this was due to the introduction of a new phonics teaching scheme which took time to embed. These issues have largely been resolved and pupils are currently doing well. However, a large number of pupils have recently entered the school in Year 1, which, you predict, will impact negatively on results. You are tracking this group of pupils separately to ensure progress from their starting points. Quality, focused teaching for pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who did not pass the Year 1 phonics screening check has ensured that they are on track to pass this year, in Year 2.
- Pupils' attendance has been below national figures in the recent past. However, you and your staff have been determined to improve pupils' attendance and to reduce the number of pupils who regularly miss school. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved and is now broadly in line with national figures. You take effective actions to engage parents with prioritising attendance and realise that these efforts need to be sustained in order to ensure that pupils progress as well as they should.
- The local authority has provided effective support to you and your senior leaders to improve systems of accountability. You have begun to track the progress of different groups of pupils better as they join the school throughout the year. You realise that this needs to be sustained and further developed so that governors can more precisely hold leaders to account and ensure that standards improve.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- systems of accountability for the progress and achievement of pupils are strengthened so that they can be precisely monitored by governors
- actions are sustained to improve the proportion of children leaving early years with a good level of development
- attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check continues to improve to above national expectations

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Innes-Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, your deputy headteachers and the leaders of the early years, pupil premium, English and mathematics, and a representative from the local authority. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and I met with a group of pupils. I met with four members of the governing body.

We visited the school's breakfast club provision to make sure that pupils are well cared for. We visited classrooms together and I looked at a range of pupils' work. We discussed the progress of different groups of pupils and the school's plans for improvement. I considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils from Ofsted's online surveys as well as letters received from parents during the inspection. I scrutinised evidence from a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance, information regarding procedures for safeguarding and monitoring of behaviour, information on how the pupil premium is spent, analysis of attendance and a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding and behaviour. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, out on the playground and in the lunch hall. I checked the school's single central register to ensure that it met current safeguarding regulations.