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Mrs Abigail Mulligan  
Headteacher  
The Mount Junior Infant & Nursery School  
The Mount  
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West Yorkshire  
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Dear Mrs Mulligan

### **Short inspection of The Mount Junior Infant & Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 October 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 December 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are very ambitious for the pupils in your school and are passionate and determined that every child should receive the best education possible. The school's ethos of 'Reason, resilience, respect' is understood and adhered to by pupils and staff. This has resulted in a happy and nurturing environment.

Since your appointment as headteacher in April 2016, the school has benefited from your clear vision and relentless drive to address the improvement priorities. The school has experienced a period of turbulence in staffing since it was last inspected, which has limited the pace of improvement. However, you have brought stability to the school and made good use of your considerable expertise and knowledge of effective teaching to develop the skills of your staff. Staff are fully supportive of the changes that have been implemented and, as a result, behaviour has improved and pupils make good progress.

Together with your special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), who is new to the role, you have examined the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The recruitment of additional staff with necessary skills has improved provision for this group of pupils. You are providing good support for the school's SENCo to help her adapt quickly to her role. The effect of this work is too early to determine and you realise that there is still work to be done to improve

the progress of these pupils.

In response to a dip in outcomes achieved by pupils in 2016, you have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This has led to a substantial increase in the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and mathematics this year, which demonstrates that you and your team have the capacity to improve the school further. You are aware that, although you have made some improvements to the teaching of writing across the school, there is more to do to ensure that a higher proportion of pupils meet the expected standards.

The high expectations that all staff have of pupils is reflected in the positive attitudes that pupils have in the classroom. Pupils are well behaved and polite, and show consideration and care for each other. They have a good understanding of the rules that underpin the school's values, such as 'Treat others as you would like to be treated.' Pupils report a noticeable difference in pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes. You and your deputy head have provided training for lunchtime staff and invested in new apparatus and clubs, such as the arts and crafts club and homework club, which are popular with pupils.

Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes to the governing body. Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are committed to the school by holding more regular meetings to ensure that improvements continue. Governors understand the school's strengths and areas for development, and have made sure that their own development has kept pace with change.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. The record of checks on staff meets statutory requirements and is fully compliant. Staff are given a thorough induction and training in safeguarding and know what to do should they have any concern about a child. Senior leaders deal swiftly and effectively with any safeguarding concerns that arise, closely liaising with families and other agencies to support pupils.

Pupils told me that they feel safe at school. They are aware of different types of bullying and know how to stay safe online. Furthermore, pupils believe that bullying is rare but if it does happen staff act quickly to sort it out.

Attendance has improved. You have created a new role of attendance leader, who works closely with the families of children who may be more vulnerable. Signs of improvement in attendance for these pupils is beginning to show. Working with other agencies, you have recently taken a number of steps to reduce persistent absence levels for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, it is too soon to determine the effect of this work.

## Inspection findings

- For this inspection, I focused on the strategies introduced by the school to raise standards in reading and writing by the end of key stage 1. You and other senior leaders have identified that improving language and communication skills of the youngest children would help them to read and write more fluently. Leaders now expect all adults to create an environment that focuses on developing these skills. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was lower than the national average until 2016 and is now similar to the national average, with disadvantaged pupils achieving above the national average. By the end of key stage 1, pupils' outcomes in reading and writing are improving and leaders are aware that this needs to be sustained.
- I considered how school leaders were using pupil premium funding to raise disadvantaged pupils' attainment. You closely track the disadvantaged pupils' progress, and governors receive regular updates on the performance of this group of pupils. Leaders target pupil premium funding to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils and teaching is supporting most of these pupils to make good progress. Consequently, a growing number of disadvantaged pupils are now achieving the expected standards of attainment. You recognise that there are still some disadvantaged pupils with lower starting points who need to make improved progress to catch up to the expected standard for their age.
- Current key stage 2 pupils make good progress in their writing, with attainment of girls rising. The curriculum has been refreshed since the last inspection to motivate pupils' interest in writing. There is now an increased focus for pupils to have first-hand experiences, such as visits from authors and theatre companies and local visits, to inspire their writing. Providing pupils with such experiences has reaped benefits because pupils' books show sustained pieces of writing which are thoughtful and imaginative. As one pupil explained, 'I am bursting with ideas' when it comes to writing.
- Together with the leader for English, we looked closely at the work in pupils' books. As you had retained pupils' books from the previous academic year, we were able to look at the progress that pupils had made over an extended period of time. We agreed that many pupils' work showed clearly that pupils are making strong progress in their writing but there are still some pupils who are not making enough progress.
- I spent time looking at how effective provision was for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Over time, this group of pupils have not made good progress and there have been issues around the attendance of these pupils in school. You have begun work to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families. You have appointed additional staff to improve further the outcomes of these pupils. The SENCo has spent time ensuring that additional support is well matched to the needs of pupils. Although there are signs of effective support, you recognise that there is still work to be done. This involves regular monitoring of the effect of this support by leaders, including carefully checking the progress of these pupils.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching in writing continues to improve so that a greater proportion of pupils make accelerated progress
- pupil premium funding is used to support the progress of disadvantaged pupils with lower starting points so they begin to catch up to the expected standard for their age
- the improvements in provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully embedded and these pupils make at least good progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Ella Besharati  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and other members of the leadership team including the deputy head, the leader for English and the SENCo. I met with a member of the governing body. I met with a group of key stage 2 pupils and spoke to other pupils during the day. I observed teaching and learning in all classes. I looked at a range of pupils' books, some together with the leader for English. I met with the person responsible for attendance. I took into account the views of 64 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 28 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I checked the school's single central record of recruitment checks and I looked at a range of other documents related to safeguarding. I took into account school documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school's website.