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Mrs Cindy Shield  
Headteacher  
Mountfield Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Shield

### **Short inspection of Mountfield Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 27 March 2019, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in March 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You know the school and its context well. You and your team's ambition for every pupil to enjoy learning and be the best they can is demonstrated in the good progress pupils make across the curriculum. You have a well-placed understanding of the barriers that pupils face and you are determined to eradicate these.

Loyal senior and middle leaders share your energy and determination to provide a memorable and inspiring education. Likewise, staff work hard together to share ideas and ensure that everything they do benefits pupils. Governors and the wider trust are hugely supportive of you. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths, its context and those areas which need to further develop.

Your priorities for improvement are accurate and clear. You recognised quickly that pupils' outcomes were not where you wanted them to be. As a consequence, you have worked successfully with staff to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teaching is consistently characterised by strong relationships. Teachers ask effective questions that develop and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers' planning is carefully considered. The use of high-quality assessment enables pupils' needs to be more readily met. As a result, pupils' progress and attainment across the school are improving.

You, other leaders, and staff have been systematic in addressing the areas of improvement identified at the last inspection. As a result, the teaching of mathematics has strengthened, and current pupils are making good progress. All pupils learn and practise new skills so that they are secure, before applying them to reasoning and problem-solving tasks. They use a range of resources to support their answers. Pupils show confidence in tackling their work and are keen to explain the methods used. However, you recognise that most-able pupils would benefit from greater challenges in their work.

You manage high levels of pupil mobility successfully. Your team responds quickly to support pupils who are new to school and make them feel welcome. As a result, pupils have a strong sense of belonging and thrive in this fully inclusive school. A parent captured the ethos of the school successfully, saying: 'The school feels like a family and all the children support each other.'

Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. They work hard and are always keen to produce their very best work. They spoke enthusiastically about their experiences and the care they are given. One pupil said: 'Teachers make everyone happy, they encourage you and sort things out.' Pupils develop excellent citizenship skills. They are keen to take on responsibilities through roles such as being a member of the school council, mini police and sports leaders.

Parents praised you and your team highly for the many opportunities you provide, and your close attention to the needs of each child. They also said that you support them well, too. One parent's comment reflects the opinions of many: 'Staff are incredible and keep trying to find ways to help.'

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Mountfield Primary School is a truly inclusive and nurturing school. The school is characterised by mutual respect and strong relationships. These strong relationships and high levels of trust between adults and pupils ensure that pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is exemplary. Pupils are polite, considerate and friendly to each other and to visitors. You work tirelessly to ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for. Pupils know that if they speak to staff about an issue or a concern, it will be sorted quickly and effectively.

All staff are vigilant and work together to guarantee that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have ensured that staff, including governors, are highly trained. Consequently, staff identify and report any issues in a timely manner and safeguarding records are accurate and well maintained.

You, as designated safeguarding lead, and the school's family support officer are highly skilled in supporting pupils and their families. Together, you ensure that they access appropriate help and support in a timely manner. The many actions that you and the staff take to improve pupils' academic progress, emotional well-being and resilience are at the heart of the school's core vision.

Your strengthened, project-based curriculum supports improved attendance, which is now above the national average. Pupils said that they enjoy coming to school. It is a vibrant and happy place to learn. Additionally, you and the family support officer collectively analyse the attendance of individual pupils closely. As a result, you know precisely why every pupil is absent from school. Together, you work hard to minimise the barriers and take prompt action to improve attendance, for example by collecting pupils from home to bring them into school. Therefore, pupils' attendance continues to improve.

## **Inspection findings**

- First, I wanted to establish if you had continued to strengthen teaching in mathematics since the last inspection. I recognised that staff had accessed high-quality training. This has helped them to acquire new skills. The subject leader for mathematics has ensured that practices are consistent across the school. All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are brimming with mathematical confidence. Most know their number facts and multiplication tables thoroughly. Mathematical knowledge and skills are developed very well. The curriculum is well sequenced, balancing a focus on basic number with frequent opportunities for pupils to reason and solve problems. Pupils aspire to become 'Maths Masters', which promotes a love of maths. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has strongly improved. These standards are now in line with the national averages. Evidence from work in pupils' books and your own assessment data shows that pupils are making strong progress across school. However, you recognise that the most able pupils could be challenged to extend their learning further.
- Leaders correctly identified that there have been effective efforts made to improve reading. I found this to be the case in classrooms and around the school. Each classroom has a unique area dedicated to promoting reading. You have provided pupils with peaceful, positive places to enjoy books. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the different texts they have read. It was also very encouraging to hear how keen they are to read at home. Leaders have planned the curriculum carefully to promote pupils' reading skills. The staff's attention to broadening vocabulary has also supported reading development. For example, teachers check pupils' understanding of subject-specific words and ensure that they understand the meaning of the word in a given context. The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. Consequently, pupils' progress and attainment in reading continue to improve.
- Another area that I explored was how well teachers support and challenge pupils in their writing. Over time, the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standards, and the higher standards, in writing at the end of key stage 1 has often been lower than the national averages. The development of writing begins very successfully in the early years. Leaders now ensure that these strong foundations are positively developed across key stages 1 and 2. Work in pupils' books indicates progress in writing is improving rapidly.

- You ensure that pupils have many opportunities to write at length and for different purposes. Pupils take a pride in their work and handwriting is well presented. In key stage 1, pupils are becoming fluent and accurate when using punctuation. They are developing a greater understanding of how to use a wide range of sentence structures. In key stage 2, pupils are becoming increasingly confident writers, using a wide range of language techniques in order to engage the reader. Teachers challenge pupils to use dictionaries to think about and use more ambitious vocabulary. As a result of your actions, achievement in writing is improving for current pupils. However, you acknowledge that writing skills need to further improve across the wider curriculum because the high standards and expectations seen in English books are not always transferred into writing within the project books.
- You are rightly proud of the broad, balanced and extensively enriched curriculum you offer to pupils. You have placed high importance on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects, for example in history, geography and science. The curriculum inspires and enthuses pupils. They spoke confidently about projects they study and facts they have learned. Project books, in both key stage 1 and key stage 2, show how pupils are also benefiting from opportunities to practise and develop mathematical and writing skills. The presentation of pupils' work and the quality of their handwriting in these books show improvement across the year, but leaders recognise that this needs to further develop.
- Finally, I was keen to review the leaders' work in early years. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception has been broadly in line with the national average for the last two years. Children join school with skills that are below those typical for their age, particularly in relation to self-confidence, communication and language and physical development. Strong and ambitious leaders and highly effective staff ensure that they provide quality experiences for the children within a rich and creative environment. The effective routines and procedures in place support children to settle into school successfully. Learning activities are very well matched to children's needs. Adult-led activities are carefully balanced with informal play opportunities. Staff have high expectations and provide a good level of challenge. As a result, children play and learn well together. Progress from starting points to the end of Reception show that the children make strong progress.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide more opportunities to challenge pupils in their learning so that a greater proportion reach the higher standards they are capable of, particularly in writing and mathematics
- teachers continue to build upon recent improvements in presentation and handwriting across the wider curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Newcastle upon Tyne. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alison Stephenson  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you and the senior leadership team to discuss the impact of actions you are taking to continue to improve the school. We observed learning together in the early years and key stages 1 and 2. I looked at pupils' books and talked to pupils about their learning and progress. I held meetings with middle leaders and a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also met with a trustee and the chief executive of the multi-academy trust. I talked to a group of key stage 1 and 2 pupils and heard them read. I scrutinised a number of documents, including attendance records and a range of safeguarding records. I also examined the school's written evaluation of its work, the school improvement plan and subject action plans. I observed pupils' behaviour at break and at social times. I reviewed seven results from the staff questionnaire. I took account of the views of parents through examining seven responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, and seven free-text responses.