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Mr M Couper Barton
Headteacher
Mayfield Primary School
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Dear Mr Couper Barton

Short inspection of Mayfield Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 June 2018, 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment you have worked closely with the trust, the local governing body and the local authority to navigate the school successfully through an unsettled period in terms of the leadership and management of the school.

You lead with commitment and integrity, demonstrating very high aspirations for pupils. You say, 'We don't write the story for our pupils before they have lived it.' This was evident during the inspection. The school's values are clearly displayed around the school building and in all classrooms. As a consequence, pupils know them well. Pupils referred to these values during the inspection when discussing behaviour and their aspirations for the future. Virtually all parents and carers who replied to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, said that their children were happy and well cared for at school.

Leaders provide pupils with a welcoming and friendly environment. Photographs and pupils' work are displayed to celebrate the broad curriculum pupils enjoy. Pupils are proud of their school and are grateful for the time teachers take to ensure that their learning is developed. They particularly enjoy the 'Mayfield Magic Moments', which are regular occasions where the curriculum is enriched by special experiences to challenge, engage and motivate pupils further.

During the inspection, we considered areas where further work is required to support the school's improvement. You are aware that, while much improvement has been made to the teaching of writing throughout school, further work is required to ensure that pupils' attainment increases by the end of key stages 1 and 2, and to more closely reflect rates of attainment seen nationally. Additionally, the school's evaluation accurately identifies that leaders must reduce rates of persistent absence and increase attendance for pupils. Finally, the teaching of reading should be further improved, most notably for pupils who are disadvantaged, to help to develop their spelling, vocabulary and reading comprehension skills.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Visitors are checked thoroughly on entry to the school and information is provided relating to safeguarding, including fire-safety procedures. New members of staff are subject to rigorous pre-employment checks to ensure that they do not pose any risk to pupils.

Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of how to stay safe in the real world and online. They have a well-developed respect for diversity and are grateful for the way in which they are cared for by their teachers. Staff and governors receive a broad range of information and regular training in the area of safeguarding. This ensures that support provided to pupils is timely and appropriate.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection I shared with you a number of lines of enquiry. The first considered actions taken by leaders to improve pupils' behaviour and welfare. You are aware that, historically, behaviour has not been strong enough in school. Leaders have worked proactively to improve this area. Pupils receive rewards for good behaviour. Additionally, statements celebrating positive behaviour are displayed around school. You make your expectations clear to pupils and provide well-structured care, guidance and support. You have created a nurture room where pupils who are struggling with their behaviour or emotions can visit to receive advice and support from members of the pastoral team. As a result, pupils say that behaviour in school is good and bullying is rare. When bullying does happen, teachers resolve issues effectively. This was evident during the inspection when we analysed behaviour records and observed pupils' behaviour in school.
- Your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness has highlighted that the rate of pupils' absence, including persistent absence, is too high. Leaders are working hard to address this issue. You work effectively with the pastoral team to monitor rates of absence closely. Absence is followed up immediately, using a range of strategies, including visiting families at home. Pupils receive rewards for good attendance. While much work has been done in this area and improvements have been seen for some groups of pupils, further work is required to reduce persistent absence, so rates reflect those seen nationally.

- My next line of enquiry considered what leaders are doing to improve pupils' phonics and other reading skills in the early years and key stage 1. Staff receive training to ensure that they are secure in their teaching of phonics. The progress of pupils is closely monitored and additional support provided where it is required. The books that pupils take home allow them to practise the sounds taught in school. Progress from pupils' initial starting points is strong and the school's current performance information shows a rise in pupils' phonic skills in Year 1. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards for their age in the Year 1 phonics screening check, while improving, is still below that seen nationally.
- Leaders ensure that teachers and teaching assistants receive training to develop their ability to teach reading comprehension skills. Reading skills are taught systematically throughout the school. Teachers introduce high-quality literature during lessons and pupils enjoy taking part in reading challenges. All classrooms have well-resourced book corners and pupils make good use of the school library. Leaders have introduced a 'reading café' which enables pupils to share books with family members. The success of this approach is evident not only in the high standard of work in both pupils' work and on display, but also in their engagement in reading and development of speaking and listening skills. However, while improvements are evident in current pupils' rates of progress and in aspects of published performance information, pupils' attainment in reading at key stage 1 remains below that seen nationally. This is also the case at the higher standard at the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive additional support with their reading and writing skills. Teachers use assessment effectively to identify areas where extra support is required. This support is provided during lessons and in small group sessions. As a consequence of these actions, the school's own performance information shows that strong progress is currently being made by disadvantaged pupils from their initial starting points. Additionally, recent published end of key stage 2 performance information shows that the progress of disadvantaged pupils in reading has increased and is currently in line with the top 20% of pupils nationally. However, the proportion of these pupils achieving the expected and higher standards of attainment in reading and writing at key stages 1 and 2 is still below that seen nationally.
- You have successfully identified and dealt with historical inaccuracies in the assessment of pupils' achievement in key stage 1. Focused training and the improved use of the tracking and assessment system have helped to increase the level of challenge for pupils and the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' performance. The school's most recent published end of key stage 1 performance information shows that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in writing and mathematics, and the proportion reaching the higher standard in mathematics, have risen for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.
- My final line of enquiry concerned ways in which pupils are supported to develop their skills in writing throughout the school. Leaders monitor pupils' progress in writing and have identified that pupils require additional support in the areas of spelling, grammar and vocabulary development. A new writing strategy has been

put in place throughout school to specifically address these skills. Leaders ensure that pupils' writing activities link to high-quality reading texts. Pupils write at length in subjects across the curriculum. Enrichment activities are regularly provided to stimulate learning. For example, visits from local authors promote a love of storytelling. Pupils' writing skills are improving. The work in their books shows evidence of progress across a wide range of writing styles throughout the curriculum. While published end of key stage 2 performance information shows that pupils' progress in writing is broadly average, further time is required to fully embed this new system of teaching and to raise attainment at key stages 1 and 2.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they work closely with parents to ensure that persistent absence is reduced to reflect more closely absence rates seen nationally
- writing skills, including pupils' use of grammar, punctuation, spelling and vocabulary are further embedded to ensure that the attainment of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, improves at the end of key stages 1 and 2 to reflect more closely the national average
- a greater number of pupils achieve the expected standards for their age in the Year 1 phonics screening check
- the attainment of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, improves in reading to reflect more closely that seen nationally on average at the end of key stages 1 and 2.

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 Oldham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gill Pritchard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher to discuss issues relating to school improvement. I also met with the chief executive officer of the trust and a governor. I spoke with the school's business manager about staff recruitment procedures. I met with subject leaders to discuss pupils' current performance in the school and the pastoral team to discuss procedures linked to safeguarding and pupils' behaviour and welfare. I also met with the school's improvement partner. I had a formal discussion with a group of pupils

about their personal development, behaviour and welfare. We also discussed their learning.

Accompanied by you, I visited all classes in the school, including the library and nurture room. I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and as they moved around the school. I scrutinised examples of pupils' work and reviewed documents, including the record of checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. I also examined the school's self-evaluation, improvement planning and current performance information. Additionally, I considered 26 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 30 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online parent survey. I also considered information posted on the school's website.