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Mr Luke Whitney
Headteacher
Mayflower Primary School
Evington Drive
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Dear Mr Whitney

Short inspection of Mayflower Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 September 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 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.

Since taking up your post at the start of this school year, you have quickly established positive relationships with staff and parents. You got to know the school over the previous two terms but have wisely avoided making quick, sweeping changes to any of the policies that have served the school well in recent years. However, from working alongside you throughout the day, it is clear that you already have an insight into areas where leadership and teaching can be developed to improve the school even further.

All of the parents spoken to during the inspection, and the overwhelming majority of those who completed Parent View, were full of praise for your school. Time and again they used the term 'family' to express the quality of the relationships between the children of different ages and ethnicities. As one parent wrote: 'The enthusiasm of the staff at Mayflower is unending. The staff clearly love the school and that rubs off on to the children, giving them a profound feeling of pride, ownership and respect for their place of learning. We love Mayflower.'

Your predecessor, and your senior teachers, deserve a great deal of the credit for ensuring that the school continues to serve its community so successfully. Many aspects of the curriculum are exceptional. Staff and pupils are rightly proud of the school's international links, environmental activities, sporting achievements,

involvement in local heritage projects and anti-bullying work. The school has won more awards than can be listed here. However, perhaps the unique experience of being a pupil at Mayflower can be illustrated by noting that it is 'officially' the funniest school in Leicester (Leicester Comedy Festival Loving Laughter Award) and is England's regular representative in the annual Eurovision for Schools competition (Schoolvision). To sum up, your pupils, from 26 different ethnic groups, enjoy a fabulous curriculum that gives them a deep understanding of their own locality and of the wider world.

At the time of the previous inspection, the pupils' behaviour and personal development were highlighted as particular strengths of the school. These remain very positive outcomes. Pupils are proud of their school. They have a strong sense of community and the pupils from all the different ethnic groups play and learn happily together.

The school's leaders have tackled the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection with some success. They track closely how well pupils are doing and are clear about the progress made by different groups. Pupils are well prepared for their secondary schools. Overall, they make good progress and typically leave the school with standards in reading, writing and mathematics at least in line with the national averages. However, in key stage 2, lower-attaining pupils typically make slower progress than other pupils nationally from the same starting points. You are aware of the importance of finding out, and tackling, the reasons for their relative underachievement.

The previous report also asked the school's middle leaders to contribute more to the school's drive for improvement. There have been notable successes here. Middle leaders now have the skills to check how effectively pupils are learning in the areas for which they have responsibility. They check the quality of work in books and, each term, analyse how well pupils are learning against the expectations for their ages. Middle leaders use this information to draw up plans for improvement. However, these plans lack precise and measurable targets. This makes it difficult for others to check if the plans are having their intended impact on pupils' learning. It also limits the ability of governors to judge if the school's aspirations for pupils are sufficiently ambitious.

There have been considerable changes to the composition of the governing body since the last inspection. The previous report recommended that governors receive training to enable them to compare the school's performance with other schools nationally. Some, but not many governors, have received this training. This limits the ability of the governing body to identify areas where better progress should be prioritised and to hold leaders to account for achieving the desired improvements.

Finally, the last report asked teachers to provide plenty of challenge in lessons for more-able pupils. This is particularly evident in pupils' mathematics books and in their outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportions of pupils exceeding the expected standards in these areas have improved.

Safeguarding is effective.

The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. The leadership team, school staff and governors take very seriously their duty to keep pupils safe. All staff have been trained on safeguarding and child protection. They report promptly any concerns they may have about pupils. Key members of the school staff know the school community extremely well. They work very effectively with parents, and with representatives of different faith groups, to ensure that pupils are kept safe. The school keeps detailed records of any issues that arise, the actions taken and the impact of these actions.

Pupils said they receive interesting and helpful guidance from experts to help them understand any risks they encounter in their daily lives, including when using digital technologies. They have huge respect for the adults in the school. They say they would readily seek help with any issues at school, or at home, that were upsetting them.

Inspection findings

- In the year following the last inspection, pupils' scores in the Year 1 phonics screening check were well below the national average. Leaders reviewed the way phonics skills were taught. Training for staff and opportunities to work with colleagues in other schools were provided. There has been a four-year rising trend in phonics scores. In 2017, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard was considerably above the national average.
- The majority of pupils who start the school in the Nursery or Reception classes speak English as an additional language. Many are not exposed to spoken English within the home. Staff are expert at developing early English language acquisition. In addition, their partnership with parents is exemplary. For example, most parents attend the weekly sessions which highlight what their children are learning. Grandparents, too, are regular visitors to the school. These features of school life, strong teaching and the engagement of families, have had a great impact upon children's learning. The proportions of pupils achieving the early learning goals in communication and language and in literacy are now in line with the national averages.
- Progress in reading in key stage 2 was a little below the national average in 2016. Teachers identified that the additional demands of the revised national curriculum required them to change the way that they develop reading comprehension. Teachers now ensure that pupils read a wider range of books. In lessons, pupils are expected to show a deeper understanding of the texts they are studying. For example, they have to explain why particular words have been chosen and why characters behave or react as they do. This approach is improving reading standards, but leaders know that it needs to be fully embedded if progress is to rise above the national average.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 has been below the national average since the previous inspection. This reflected the below average outcomes that children achieved at the end of the Reception Year and in the Year 1 phonics screening

check. The progress of key stage 1 pupils in 2017 was stronger. They benefited from new ways of teaching numeracy and literacy skills. Pupils currently in Year 2 are showing higher skills in these areas than in the past.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- lower-attaining pupils make progress that is at least in line with the national averages of pupils from the same starting points
- all school plans for improvement have ambitious, measurable targets for pupils that enable senior leaders and governors to check their impact
- governors receive training on how to analyse the school's performance information so they can compare how well the school is doing with schools nationally, and can hold senior leaders to account for the school's effectiveness.

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

Anthony O'Malley
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and other members of staff to discuss the school's effectiveness. I also met with three governors and a representative of the local authority. I met with two groups of pupils and talked with others around the school and during lessons. I observed teaching and learning throughout the school and heard pupils read. I looked at work in pupils' books. I considered numerous documents, including those linked to keeping the pupils safe, the school's self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan. I considered the 18 responses to Parent View, together with the views of parents gathered as they brought their children to school.