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Mr K Geary
Headteacher
New Milton Junior School
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Dear Mr Geary

Short inspection of New Milton Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 28 February 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 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You lead the school with a deep moral purpose to ensure that pupils thrive and learn well. You have successfully built leadership capacity and developed a culture of continuous improvement. You, your governors and other leaders are all determined that pupils at your school achieve their best. You have developed a strong team of leaders who all focus rigorously on improving the quality of teaching and learning, so that pupils make good progress.

You and your staff have developed a caring, friendly school. Pupils behave well and enjoy their time at school. They are appreciative of opportunities provided by extra-curricular activities and visits, such as trips to the Houses of Parliament, a bakery and a sound recording studio. A pupil explained that visits 'open doors to the future'. Links with the wider school community are strong. For example, local businesses and groups give talks to pupils about their work. Parents recommend the school to others, and teachers enjoy working at the school.

You evaluate realistically the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a result, your improvement plans sharply identify areas for development. Governors monitor improvements rigorously and call leaders to account effectively. Areas for improvement in the last inspection report have been addressed well and, overall, standards have improved, especially in reading and writing. In particular, you have

strengthened ways in which teachers provide advice and support to pupils so they can make immediate improvements to their work.

In 2016, there was a dip in mathematics outcomes for pupils in Year 6. You took swift action to find out why pupils performed less well than expected and have consequently strengthened mathematics teaching. Typically, pupils currently in the school are beginning to make better progress in mathematics, although there is still work to be done to increase the rate of progress for all pupils.

You use your detailed knowledge about the difficulties faced by some disadvantaged pupils to apply appropriate strategies to help them. These actions are generally successful, and the rate of progress made by disadvantaged pupils is accelerating. Pupils who, in addition, have special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well supported and proudly report that they are helped to work things out for themselves. Differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are diminishing.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding, with positive relationships and open communication between adults and children. The school's safeguarding administration is fit for purpose. Leaders meticulously log their communication with outside agencies, and information is retrieved efficiently when needed. Leaders' detailed record-keeping enables timely support for vulnerable pupils.

Pupils report that they feel safe. They are able to explain how to keep themselves safe, for example, when they are using the internet. Pupils also report that there is little bullying and that adults will take action should they have a concern.

Parents agree that their children are safe in school.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused particularly on the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics. I also investigated lower-attaining pupils' reading. The progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was also considered. These key lines of enquiry were agreed with you and feature in the school's self-evaluation and action plan for improvement.
- Over recent years, attendance figures have been below national averages, although on an upward trajectory. Leaders take deliberate action to improve attendance, following up any dips in pupils' attendance. As a result, since September, attendance figures show rapid improvement, and attendance is now above the national average for primary schools. In addition, there has been a reduction in the number of pupils that are persistently absent.
- Over the last three years, the trend in pupils' outcomes for reading and writing has been upwards. Disappointingly, in 2016 pupils' progress in mathematics by

the end of Year 6 dipped and was significantly below average and in the lowest 10% of schools. You identified that pupils had not had enough practice to apply and explain their mathematical knowledge when solving real-life mathematical problems. Also, pupils needed more opportunities to manipulate large numbers. With your team and with the support of the local authority, you have strengthened mathematics teaching. Pupils are beginning to show more progress in mathematics, especially pupils who are disadvantaged and who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You correctly identify, confirmed during the inspection, that pupils should make even better progress in mathematics.

- You have put appropriate plans in place to improve further the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils report that strategies provided by teachers and teaching assistants are helping them to become independent. Typically, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are confident, keen to learn and make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils who have weak reading skills have helpful opportunities to read often to others. Such pupils enjoy reading and use strategies successfully to improve their reading accuracy and speed. Interesting texts, appropriate to their abilities, are provided and promoted. Pupils report excitedly on how texts inspire them. For example, one pupil was moved by the story of Anne Frank. Another pupil explained how he enjoyed reading about the human body, confidently using the book's glossary to find the meanings of scientific words.
- Around a third of pupils are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Governors and leaders have targeted funding effectively to raise this group of pupils' achievement as it has lagged behind that of their classmates in the past. Teachers know the needs of disadvantaged pupils well and make sure that effective extra support is provided. As a result of clear plans and strategies, disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are typically making good progress.
- Parents are supportive of the school's work. The vast majority confirm that their children are taught well and that they are making good progress. Written comments made in response to the online survey were positive, praising leaders and teachers in the school for the positive educational experience that their children receive. A typical response was, 'A very well run and managed school that keeps parents up to date with any issues. The teaching is very positive and enjoyable and my children's progress is excellent across all subjects.'
- Highly committed senior and middle leaders provide effective support for colleagues so that teaching enables pupils to make strong progress. Staff report high levels of morale and that leaders do everything they can to ensure that the school has a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching improves further so that pupils make faster progress in mathematics to

match their rapid progress in reading and writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Child
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, several members of staff, including the mathematics leader, and four governors, one of whom was the chair of the governing body. I also met two representatives of Hampshire local authority.

I observed learning in all year groups across the school with you. I scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and a sample of mathematics books from all year groups.

I considered 26 responses made by staff and 37 responses made by pupils to Ofsted's online surveys. I took careful account of 32 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 19 free text responses, also made online. In addition, I held conversations with parents at the beginning of the school day.

I spoke with pupils from across the school during lessons and met formally with a group of 12 pupils to gather their views about the school. I heard three pupils read.

I looked at a range of the school's documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, information about pupils' learning and progress, minutes of governor meetings and records regarding safeguarding and attendance.