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Mrs Claire Wicks
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Wicks

Short inspection of Manland Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 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 the school was judged to be good in November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Leaders have ensured that all areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed. The high standards achieved at the end of all key stages have been maintained and built upon. You took up the leadership of the school at Easter 2017. Swiftly, you set about identifying the school's strengths and how you could make further improvements to make the school even better. Since this time, you have worked tirelessly and with great energy and enthusiasm to provide very effective and purposeful leadership. You are ably supported by your newly appointed leadership team, and all staff share your passion for continued improvement. Together, you are acting to improve the school still further and there are already tangible results. Your development plans are comprehensive and identify the right actions to ensure that there is continual and sustained improvement.

You have acted to ensure that there is a high degree of consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. This has included introducing a new marking and feedback policy, which has helped to reduce teachers' workload and which is also providing pupils with good-quality next steps to improve their work and overall

learning. You have put in place effective systems to check the quality of teaching across the school and to ensure that all teachers have access to high-quality training and professional development. Teachers who are new to the school value the support that they are receiving. You and your senior leaders are creating a culture in which all staff are involved in continually reviewing and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Responses to the staff questionnaire indicated that they embrace this approach. You are planning to enhance the existing senior leadership by providing greater opportunities for other staff to take on leadership roles.

Almost all parents and carers spoken to at the start of the day or who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, expressed strong support for everything the school does. This comment encapsulates the views of many: 'The teachers work extremely hard. The headteacher is making good and positive improvements. Manland is a happy and inclusive school. I am very grateful this has been my children's primary school experience.'

The curriculum inspires pupils to learn and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, including their understanding of British values. You have increased opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of different faiths and cultures through further development of the existing 'house learning days.' On these days, pupils work in vertical groups in their houses and experience a range of activities designed to increase their understanding of life in different countries and cultures of the world. Pupils spoken to during the inspection spoke excitedly about the forthcoming day which was to follow the inspection. Interesting topics such as 'World War Two' and 'The Great Fire of London' provide excellent opportunities for pupils to write within a range of genres. You have identified that you want to enhance learning further by providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length within all topic work. Pupils have many opportunities to participate in a range of after-school clubs. They also benefit from a variety of visits and visitors to the school, which spark pupils' interests and inspire them to produce good-quality writing.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is always exemplary. Their highly positive attitudes make a strong contribution to their very good learning and progress. Pupils spoken to during the inspection were confident, articulate and keen to speak to me. They are a credit to the school.

Governors make a significant contribution to the strong leadership of the school. They are highly skilled and well informed about all aspects of school life. This means that their challenge and support for school leaders are both highly effective. The governing body recognises the energy, pace, skills and improved infrastructure that you have brought to the headship role. They rightly have great confidence in you and your leadership team.

Safeguarding is effective.

Arrangements for all aspects of safeguarding are highly effective. Leaders, including governors, have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding at Manland Primary School.

Procedures for checking the suitability of new members of staff to work with children are diligently maintained by the office manager. Meticulous records of training also show when an update is required for each member of staff. Consequently, all are up to date on procedures for keeping children safe and know what to do if there are any concerns.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. Parents agreed that their children are kept safe. Pupils know what bullying is and what to do if they have any concerns. The school provides regular lessons about online safety and sends reminders through newsletters for both pupils and parents.

Inspection findings

- My first key line of enquiry, to ascertain whether the school remained good, focused on finding out how well current pupils are doing and whether there is evidence that the high standards achieved in the past are likely to be maintained. In both 2016 and 2017, outcomes at the end of all stages were above average and the proportions of pupils exceeding age-related expectations were well above average at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Your tracking information shows that pupils in all year groups are making strong progress from the start of the year. It also indicates that the above-average standards achieved at the end of the early years, in the Year 1 phonics check and at the end of key stages 1 and 2 are likely at least to be maintained. The quality of work seen in pupils' books also suggests that this is likely to be the case. Pupils take pride in their work, which is presented neatly across all subjects.
- My next focus was to look at the capacity of leadership and management to sustain further improvement. You have rapidly developed a highly effective leadership team, who share your high expectations, are highly ambitious for pupils and lead by example. Your self-evaluation is accurate and you have identified appropriate actions to address those areas that you know need to develop further. You also ensure that the checks that you make on all aspects of school life are regular and rigorous.
- There is a culture of continual improvement, with a single-minded focus on ensuring the best outcomes for every pupil. You have introduced effective systems to ensure that there are opportunities for all staff to progress and develop, which they welcome. Consequently, there is excellent teaching across the school, which results in all pupils making consistently good progress.
- There is very strong capacity within the school to ensure that improvements to date are built upon and sustained, and that high standards are maintained.
- My final line of enquiry was to check whether the school has addressed all the areas for improvement that were identified at the time of the previous inspection. This asked the school to ensure that teachers plan activities to stretch all groups of pupils and to accelerate pupils' progress in reading by improving their comprehension skills.
- Since the previous inspection, the proportion of pupils who exceed age-related

expectations has been consistently well above average. Work in pupils' books indicates that teachers regularly plan activities to challenge all pupils, including the most able. You are currently focusing on ensuring appropriate challenge for all. This includes opportunities for pupils to choose demanding challenges in mathematics lessons. It is clear that teachers plan activities to meet the needs of all pupils, including the most able.

- A love of reading is fostered across the school. Pupils read daily from a selection of books to help them appreciate a variety of genre and style. They benefit from a welcoming and well-stocked library, which junior librarians help to run. Additionally, pupils are inspired by the recommendations of their classmates for books that they will enjoy. The school website provides good guidance and support for parents in choosing books for their children to read.
- In 2017, the progress that pupils made in reading from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 was above average, a reflection of the effectiveness of the school's efforts to address this area for improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more staff are involved in the leadership of the school, thus strengthening capacity for sustained improvement still further
- pupils have more opportunities to write at length in all curriculum areas.

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

Yours sincerely

Joan Beale
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I discussed the work of the school with you, your senior leaders, teachers and three governors. Additionally, I met with a representative from the local authority. You and I visited all classrooms together to observe teaching, learning and assessment and looked at the work in pupils' books in a range of subjects. I met with a group of pupils to talk about their experiences at school and also talked more informally with pupils in lessons and at breaktime. I scrutinised safeguarding policies and practice, including systems for safe recruitment of staff. I considered the school's own evaluation of its work and plans for improvement. I took account of 70 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 39 comments received electronically. I also spoke with 15 parents when they were delivering their children to school. I further considered 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.