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14 April 2016

Mrs Lee Parsons  
Headteacher  
Meadow Vale Primary School  
Moordale Avenue  
Bracknell  
Berkshire  
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Dear Mrs Parsons

### **Short inspection of Meadow Vale Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 2016, with Ross MacDonald, Ofsted Inspector, 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 school was judged to be good in May 2011.

### **Context**

There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection. In addition, the former headteacher and deputy headteacher retired in August 2015. You took up your post as headteacher in September 2015, as did the newly appointed senior leadership team. All of these new appointments were made from existing members of staff at the school.

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

This is an inclusive school in which staff work over and above the call of duty to meet the needs of pupils, especially those who find themselves in challenging circumstances. Parents are very supportive of the school. One of the many examples of this is evident in the funds raised to improve the playground. The new senior leadership team, together with governors, inspire staff to do their best and to work together as a team to help all pupils to be successful learners. There is a close working partnership between all staff, parents and pupils, so that there is a shared and common goal of securing 'success for all'. This has helped to maintain a good standard of education at the school since the last inspection.

The senior leadership team has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This has enabled you to focus sharply on the need to provide greater levels of challenge for those pupils who are more able across the school. Consequently, standards are rising quickly, and all groups of pupils are currently making strong progress.

The school is developing its plan aimed at helping to drive further improvements. However, this plan does not always include clear targets or key milestones against which progress can be measured during the year. Governors have played a key role in supporting the school during a time of significant change. They have yet to undertake an audit of their skills, abilities and responsibilities to ensure that they continue to provide the school with even greater levels of challenge.

At the time of the previous inspection, one area for improvement was identified: to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better by making certain that all teachers use assessment information to match learning activities to meet precisely the needs of individual pupils.

The quality of teaching seen during the inspection, the school's evidence about pupils' strong progress and the work in pupils' books all show that the vast majority of teaching in the school is securely good or better. There is also compelling evidence that teaching typically makes effective use of assessment information to plan learning activities that are well matched to pupils' needs. However, further improvements are required to some aspects of teaching in Year 3, particularly in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Also, while there has been a clear focus on increasing levels of challenge for pupils, particularly the more able, this has yet to be fully embedded across the whole school.

In their responses to the questionnaire, the vast majority of pupils say they are happy at school and feel well supported with their learning. Of the parents that responded to the online survey, most agree that their child is happy, feels safe at school and is making good progress. All of the staff who responded to the online survey said they are proud to be a member of staff at the school. They all agree that the school is well led and managed and enjoy working at the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. There are clear procedures and processes to manage safeguarding requirements. Pupils report feeling safe in school and know who to turn to, should they have any concerns. The local community officer visits the school to raise pupils' awareness of how to stay safe. All staff are trained in key areas of safeguarding and there are five designated leads for child protection in the school. Some of the pupils who spoke to one of the inspectors stated that they particularly value the work of the family support adviser, who provides them with strong support regarding their emotional well-being. Although teachers include aspects about British values in lessons and in assemblies, pupils' understanding of the potential dangers of radicalisation is still being developed. The school is due to review this aspect of their work shortly.

### **Inspection findings**

- The senior leadership team works effectively to support and challenge the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Leaders provide teachers

with helpful feedback to support their professional development and improve their practice.

- You track the progress of pupils very effectively. The assessment of pupils' learning identifies the work covered and how well this has been understood by pupils. This enables senior leaders to quickly pinpoint those pupils at risk of underachieving and to put in additional support where needed. This has significantly reduced the gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others.
- Together with the senior leadership team, you are having a strong impact across the majority of the school. You recognise the need to further improve some aspects of teaching and learning in Year 3, particularly in the area of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Governors work closely with senior leaders and provide you with effective support. They have yet to undertake an audit of their skills and abilities or review their respective roles and responsibilities to ensure that they provide you with even greater levels of challenge.
- Senior leaders and governors recognise the need to strengthen the school's development plan so that it becomes a more useful document to help drive further improvement by including clearer targets and milestones.
- In 2015, the proportion of children that achieved a good level of development by the end of the early years was broadly average. More pupils in Year 1 than in most schools achieved the expected standard in the phonics check (letters and the sounds that they make). Attainment at the end of Year 2 has remained significantly above average since the school was last inspected. Standards at the end of Year 6 have continued to rise but in 2015 there was a dip in the rate of pupils' progress, particularly for the more able. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Most teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and make effective use of questions and prompts to support pupils with their learning. In most classes, teachers provide pupils with an appropriate level of challenge, which pupils relish. Teaching ensures that pupils know what is expected of them and most pupils talk confidently about their work and what they are learning. Teachers provide pupils with helpful feedback that usually identifies the next steps pupils need to take in order to continue to improve.
- The progress seen in pupils' books, particularly in mathematics and English, shows a good rate of progress in most classes since the beginning of the academic year. Older pupils develop a depth of knowledge and understanding about mathematics. In English, they produce extended pieces of well-presented written work. The latter now incorporates what pupils learn in their spelling, punctuation and grammar lessons.
- The effective teaching of phonics enables pupils to read and write common words at an early age. Pupils in Year 2 can recall what they have learned in relation to words that sound the same but are spelled differently, such as 'poor' and 'pour'.
- Support staff provide effective support in lessons to those that need it. Teaching and support staff who work with pupils who have special educational needs encourage pupils to think for themselves and look for ways to solve problems. This helps pupils to develop independence and strategies to help themselves with their learning.

- In the early years, teachers track children's progress rigorously. This information is used well to plan learning activities that cater appropriately for the needs of children. This has led to all children making better progress than has been the case in the past. Last year, girls had underachieved. This is no longer the case and girls are now progressing well.
- The local authority provides the school with good and effective support. This has ensured that senior leaders have focused sharply on ensuring that teaching adds good value to pupils' learning, including for pupils who are more able at key stage 2.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- further improvements are made to the quality of teaching in Year 3, particularly in spelling, punctuation and grammar; and that challenge for the more able is securely embedded across the school
- governors undertake an audit of their skills, abilities and responsibilities so that they can provide the school with even greater levels of challenge
- the school improvement plan is revised so that it identifies clear targets and key milestones against which progress can be measured during the year.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Bracknell Forest Borough Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection meetings were held with you, your senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, the family support adviser, five governors including the chair and a representative from the local authority. Informal discussions were also held with pupils. I also spoke to a few parents at the start of the school day. My colleague and I visited 19 classes between us, observing teaching and looking at pupils' work. Some of these observations were done jointly with either you or a member of the senior leadership team. A range of school documentation was scrutinised including minutes of meetings held by the governing body, the school's development plan and self-evaluation, the school's information about pupils' current progress and reports from the local authority. I took account of 103 responses from the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View), 50 responses to the questionnaires completed by staff and 119 responses to the questionnaire completed by pupils. Documentation and records about how you keep pupils safe were also reviewed.