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Mrs Karen Gray  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Gray

### **Short inspection of Millhouse Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 6 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 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.

You are a dedicated and committed headteacher and are uncompromising in your desire for the school to continually improve. You have a clear vision for the school and the community it serves. Before your appointment, the school had been through a challenging period of instability in staffing. However, you and your leadership team have developed strong relationships with staff and established an ethos of high expectations. As a result, you and your leadership team have brought about rapid improvements to aspects of the school that had declined. Leaders have transformed the teaching of mathematics throughout the school and have convincingly improved pupils' progress in each year group.

Your school is a happy and stimulating place, where pupils feel safe and cared for. Pupils have a real voice through the school council and head boy and head girl. Pupils say they have a real influence on school improvement. When asked to discuss what they have done, a pupil said, 'I don't even know where to start, we have done so much.' They also say that the school is a safe place where everyone is welcome. Pupils also recognise how important learning is, with a pupil saying, 'My old school was good but this school is loads better. We do proper learning here.'

Since the last inspection, senior leaders have taken effective action to ensure that pupils make equally good progress in their mathematics as they do in their reading and writing. Together, we spent time in lessons and looked at pupils' work. We saw that teachers set challenging work, ensuring that the most able pupils are given opportunities to extend their learning. You and your senior leaders regularly monitor the quality of work in pupils' books to ensure that pupils are making good progress.

We also looked at the quality of phonics teaching across the school. There is now a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics in key stage 1. Although the proportion of pupils passing the phonics screening check in Year 1 has declined slightly, the school remains in line with national results. The small number of pupils who do not pass the phonics screening check are supported effectively, allowing them to quickly catch up with their peers. When we looked at evidence of reading, we saw clear progress in comprehension skills. This is reflected in the accelerated progress being made by all groups of pupils in reading. However, we did notice some inconsistencies in the approaches to the teaching of reading, which resulted in some pupils not making as much progress as they could be. We observed some very effective teaching of reading, where targeted questioning and focused activities ensured that pupils made strong progress, but this was not the case in all classes.

Another area for improvement, from the previous inspection, involved improving opportunities to systematically engage with parents and carers and the wider school community. Leaders have worked very effectively to design a curriculum that is well matched to the needs of the pupils. The teaching of British values is a high priority. Pupils say that these are reinforced during assemblies and they value the messages. Parents are extremely positive about the school, including the 'inspire' days when parents are invited into school to learn alongside their children. Parents say that these are positive and have made the school more accessible to the community. Parents say that 'the headteacher is available almost every morning to greet the children and parents as we arrive at school'.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. Staff demonstrate a consistent approach which celebrates success, rewards effort and helps pupils understand how to be safe and get along with each other. This is particularly acknowledged by pupils who recognise how kind and caring staff and pupils are. Pupils say they feel safe. Pupils said, 'Whenever you're new, people welcome you. They make you feel warm and welcome.' Pupils of all ages show exemplary manners to both adults and their peers.

A strong culture of safeguarding and care permeates the school. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through, for example, weekly assemblies. These include how to stay safe when using the internet and playing online games. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying in the school, although from time to time they do fall out. They say their teachers will always help them to resolve any difficulties or disputes. Pupils know how harmful bullying is and recognise the different forms of bullying.

Staff are well trained and know what to do if they are concerned that a pupil may be at risk of harm. You make referrals to the local authority where appropriate and work effectively with multi-agency teams to support pupils and their families in times of need.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of my visit, we agreed a number of key lines of enquiry for the inspection. First, I looked at the rates of progress that current pupils are making in reading. This is because, although reading attainment has been a strength of the school in the past, key stage 2 reading has been in the bottom 20% of schools for the past two years. Current data clearly show that all groups of pupils are making very strong progress with many pupils making accelerated progress. This is due to a real focus on vocabulary and comprehension. The comprehension books we looked at show that pupils are being challenged in all year groups and work is aspirational.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Leaders have focused on developing the library and pupils have responded by taking the lead in library sessions for themselves. Pupils were very keen to share how teachers go the extra mile to inspire them to read, such as by bringing in books from home to recommend to the pupils. In lessons we observed, there were some inconsistencies in the approaches to the teaching of reading.
- I also wanted to review the provision for disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils are supported effectively in the school. The majority of disadvantaged pupils are making at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils with additional needs are also supported effectively through targeted intervention. Care, guidance and support for disadvantaged pupils is extremely good. The school knows its pupils well and staff work incredibly hard to ensure that they support them, academically and emotionally. Pupils are given additional support when external factors mean they are not, psychologically or emotionally, in a place to learn. This means that pupils feel safe and want to be in school. Additional funding is used effectively to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as disadvantaged pupils. The school team is innovative with interventions and supports pupils in the most appropriate way for them, such as through Lego therapy.
- Leaders have worked hard to develop writing across the school. Writing books show clear progress from pupils' starting points. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils are inspired to write by providing interesting and motivating tasks in a range of subjects. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and, as a result, pupils are making strong progress from their starting points.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- improve the quality of teaching of reading so that it is consistently good or better in all classes.

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

Yours sincerely

Eve Morris  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the office manager and the leader for mathematics. I also met with two members of the governing body, had a phone call with an additional governor and spoke with a representative from the local authority. I evaluated documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, minutes of governing body meetings, behaviour and attendance records, and information about safeguarding. I spoke with several parents and considered the 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I met with a group of pupils from a range of year groups and listened to three pupils read. You and I visited every classroom together to observe teaching and learning and to scrutinise pupils' work in their books.