

18 June 2019

Mrs Sasha Howard
Headteacher
Meldreth Primary School
High Street
Meldreth
Nr Royston
Hertfordshire
SG8 6LA

Dear Mrs Howard

Short inspection of Meldreth Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 June 2019, 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 second short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in September 2010.

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 with passion, purpose and determination. You are supported well by leaders at all levels, including governors. Staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire said they were proud to be a member of staff at the school. The vast majority are highly positive about all aspects of the school's work and feel respected and motivated by leaders.

Parental views are positive. The vast majority who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and who spoke to me have confidence in you and your staff. Several spoke highly of the care and support their children receive, particularly, though not exclusively, those who joined the school relatively recently and who had settled in quickly. Parents said their children were learning well as a result.

Pupils are polite and courteous as they move around the school. They enjoy learning and behave extremely well in lessons. Pupils are keen, enthusiastic and try their best. They take great care and pride in the presentation of their work and can articulately explain their learning.

Governors hold you and your leaders to account for the quality of education by asking questions and visiting school to see for themselves how well pupils are

doing. Governors attend training regularly to make sure they are kept well informed. They keep a close eye on pupils' attendance and check the spending of additional funding, such as the pupil premium. They know it is helping disadvantaged pupils to make good progress from their individual starting points.

Since the previous inspection, outcomes for pupils have improved, including for the most able. Published information shows that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is broadly average. Outcomes for the Year 1 phonics screening check are broadly average. The proportion of key stage 1 pupils achieving at least the standards expected for their age, or who are working at greater depth, is improving. It is close to, or above average, in reading, writing and mathematics. Key stage 2 pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. Their progress in mathematics is well above average. It is average in reading and writing.

You and your leaders rightly identified that outcomes for key stage 1 pupils and progress in reading and writing at key stage 2 could be stronger. Inspection evidence shows that the actions you are taking to improve pupils' achievement are working. School information about pupils' performance, confirmed by the work in pupils' books, shows that more pupils currently at the school are working at or above the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. You and your staff have secured a strong safeguarding culture to reduce the risk of harm to pupils. Staff training is kept up to date. There are effective and rigorous procedures to record child protection information. The single central record meets requirements. You ensure that the necessary vetting and recruitment checks are carried out to verify the suitability of adults who work at the school, including volunteers. Governors check these systems are working and that records are carefully maintained.

Pupils feel safe. They told me that bullying is rare. Pupils have every confidence in staff responding quickly to any concerns they have. Peer mediators in Years 5 and 6 help other pupils to sort out any problems they may have and to resolve disputes in the playground. Similarly, play leaders organise play for younger pupils, such as setting up obstacle courses designed to improve balancing skills. Pupils take these responsibilities seriously. They say these ultimately help them in their future life. Pupils' understanding of keeping safe when using the internet is comprehensive. They know to keep settings private, not to give out personal details and to tell adults if they are worried or concerned. Pupils are knowledgeable about not playing online games or chatting with strangers.

Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire and who spoke to me were highly positive about the work the school does to keep pupils safe. Many noted the availability and willingness of the staff to listen and respond quickly to their concerns. Typically, parents say the school provides a supportive, caring

and nurturing environment. One parent said of the school, 'It feels more like a family'.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of lines of enquiry. Two of these involved looking at outcomes in writing and mathematics for key stage 1 pupils, and progress in reading and writing at key stage 2. To improve pupils' achievement, you and your leaders take decisive action to address weak teaching. You ensure that teachers receive appropriate training to develop their skills. In addition, staff provide effective support for pupils who need extra help, such as those who are new to the school or who are in danger of falling behind their classmates. Pupils with social and emotional needs are given effective help through nurture provision so they are ready to learn.
- To tackle areas identified for improvement, you and your leaders analysed successes in key stage 2 pupils' progress in mathematics and looked into how these could be applied to other subjects and to all year groups. A strength of mathematics teaching and learning is the ability of pupils to be fluent in basic skills alongside the development of mathematical reasoning from a very early stage. For example, children in early years are asked routinely to 'prove it'. This helps them to develop reasoning skills alongside an understanding of number. The successful 'magic 10' activity, designed to promote pupils' fluency in basic mathematical skills, is now accompanied by the 'magic spell' to increase spelling fluency.
- With this in mind, you have restructured the teaching of phonics and linked it more closely to spelling and handwriting. Staff now ensure pupils have a more thorough knowledge and understanding of phonics before moving on too quickly, thus increasing proficiency.
- There is an emphasis on increasing pupils' knowledge and use of vocabulary in order to improve the quality of their writing. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. For example, pupils in Year 5 were challenged to use words other than 'said' in their writing. 'Begged', 'implored' and even 'cacophonised' were among those offered to the class teacher. This demonstrates pupils' willingness to be adventurous in their word choices.
- In addition, leaders looked into how the curriculum could be used more effectively to make writing meaningful. Staff give pupils more chances to practise phonics, when reading both for a particular purpose and for pleasure. Staff make certain pupils have more opportunities to use their phonic knowledge in writing across a wide range of subjects. This helps to consolidate learning.
- As a result of the actions taken, greater proportions of pupils in every year group are working at or above the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Next, I focused on how effectively you and your leaders have used the pupil premium to diminish differences between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. Funding is used to provide before- and after-

school care, nurture provision and interventions to address gaps in eligible pupils' knowledge and skills. The pupil premium is used effectively, targeting funding appropriately to meet the very specific needs of individual pupils and helping them to make good progress.

- Finally, I wanted to know what action is being taken to improve pupils' attendance, and how effective it is. Leaders adopt a range of strategies to improve overall attendance and reduce persistent absence, including following up pupils' absences swiftly. Attendance has a high profile in school. Information is shared with parents in fortnightly newsletters. A number of pupils leave the school for long periods to travel with their families. Staff make available distance learning boxes, including online packages. Increasingly, families are taking up these learning opportunities. The attendance of this group of pupils has risen over time when they are not travelling. Attendance is broadly average overall.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build on effective strategies to ensure that pupils' progress in reading and writing equals that in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Warboys
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held discussions with you about the progress made since the previous inspection and to gather information on my lines of enquiry. I noted your evaluation of the quality of education and also information about how well pupils currently in the school are achieving. I met with you as one of the school's leaders for safeguarding to review child protection procedures. I spoke to three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

I joined you in visiting all classes, with a focus on the teaching and learning of reading and writing. I spoke to pupils and looked at work in their books. I observed and talked to pupils during breaktime. I met with a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6 to talk about their learning and other experiences at school.

I took account of the 36 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 21 free-text responses. I talked to parents as they brought their children to school. In addition, I scrutinised the 23 responses from staff to Ofsted's online questionnaire.