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Mrs Jennifer Melling
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Melling

Short inspection of Stubbings Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 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 January 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You took on the role of executive headteacher in February 2016 and appointed a new deputy headteacher who started in September 2016. You have responded quickly to improve the quality of teaching and to raise pupils' achievement.

Stubbings Infant School is a small school where the progress and attainment of each pupil have a significant impact on the overall assessment information. In 2015, pupils attained levels that were above national averages in reading, but broadly in line in writing and mathematics. In 2016, a high proportion of pupils achieved the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check, and the number of children achieving a good level of development in the early years was well above the national average. However, you and your governors recognised that pupils in key stage 1 did not achieve well enough in 2016. Overall, pupils entered the key stage with levels of development below those typically seen. Nevertheless, you have taken urgent action to make sure that pupils who are currently in the school have made much better progress through key stage 1.

At the previous inspection, school leaders were challenged to improve the use of assessment. Alongside your deputy, you have insisted that all staff have higher expectations of what pupils will achieve. You swiftly introduced more rigorous assessment processes, backing this up with more frequent checks on the quality of learning demonstrated both in lessons and in pupils' books. You have ensured that

staff are suitably trained and skilled to deliver the demands of the new curriculum. You and your governors have used the skills of external consultants to good effect so that teachers are consistently delivering lessons that are pitched at the right level, extending and challenging pupils. The cumulative impact of this work has been to improve the quality of teaching across the school so that, this year, teaching is leading to much improved learning by all groups of pupils.

Leaders were also asked to increase the attainment of higher-attaining pupils. You have rapidly improved the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics through participation in the 'maths hub'. Pupils' learning in mathematics lessons is impressive. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 concentrate for extended periods because teachers' planning and resourcing of lessons are careful and accurate, enabling pupils to immerse themselves in the learning. The most able pupils quickly apply themselves to solving problems, applying reasoning skills with confidence.

Pupils are enthusiastic and confident readers because teachers choose texts that present challenge and ensure interest. In Year 2, the most able were reading 'James and the Giant Peach' fluently and with understanding. Teachers' assessment and pupils' responses to the texts show that higher numbers are working at greater depth in reading than seen nationally. Senior leaders are delivering additional writing lessons to provide the stretch and challenge the most able pupils need. Early signs are that pupils are responding well and beginning to write using more complex grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. However, fewer pupils are attaining greater depth in writing than in reading and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your governors have ensured that safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and underpin safe practices. Record-keeping is detailed and up to date. You have effectively assessed the risks presented by occupying a challenging site and take appropriate steps to keep pupils safe.

The school works successfully with parents and carers, external agencies in the local authority and health professionals to make sure that children's needs are met well. You and your staff take particular care to meet the needs of pupils who are facing emotional challenges. Staff have built up specific skills that enable you to support pupils who have been adopted, helping them feel secure and happy in school.

You recognised that attendance needed to improve, and quickly employed the skills of an education welfare officer to support your efforts to improve boys' attendance in particular. This is paying off. Attendance overall is now slightly above national averages for all groups of pupils.

Inspection findings

- Many children arrive at Stubbings Infant School in the year in which they are three. A flexible offer is in place, so some children take up their full entitlement to pre-school education, while other children attend for only a morning each week.

Good teaching ensures that children join the Reception Year with skills and abilities slightly above those typically seen. In 2016, over 80% of children achieved a good level of development, representing an improvement in outcomes in early years for four consecutive years. Levels of development for both boys and girls were above those typically seen. Children made very good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in particular.

- Work in pupils' books shows that over three quarters of pupils are working at levels expected for their age at this point in the year and that end-of-year attainment will be much better than last year. Almost all Year 2 pupils are making the progress that is expected of them, with higher-than-average proportions exceeding expectation. Overall, the attainment of boys is slightly behind that of girls, but boys and girls are making equally strong progress.
- Since her appointment, you and your deputy headteacher have worked with intent to improve the quality of writing across the school. Together you have demanded more of teachers, insisting upon greater quality and quantity of writing from pupils. Pupils have frequent opportunities to write. This is particularly evident in topic books where pupils are writing pieces of good quality to describe science investigations, demonstrate historical inquiry skills and explain what they understand about social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of their learning. However, there remains some variability in the quality of pupils' spelling and handwriting, and pupils' presentation of their work is inconsistent.
- Teachers' relationships with pupils are very conducive to learning. Together, staff are creating an environment in which it is safe for all pupils to ask and answer questions. Teachers' planning is thorough and effectively meeting the needs of different pupil groups. Work in books shows that teachers are delivering sequences of lessons that help pupils to deepen learning, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, teachers do not systematically listen to and correct pupils' misconceptions during lessons, so opportunities to move pupils on quickly are sometimes missed.
- You have introduced much tighter systems for tracking the progress of all groups of pupils in school. As a result of holding teachers more stringently to account, all disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are currently making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school.
- All staff have worked together to design a curriculum that successfully fosters pupils' creativity and allows them to thrive. Pupils successfully develop their skills in scientific enquiry through frequent experiments and investigations, for example when looking at the spread of bacteria or investigating the effects of exercise on the body.
- Through Parent View, parents expressed their approval about all aspects of leadership and teaching, illustrative of the school's high regard in the community.
- Stubbings Infant School is a very happy school. Pupils are proud to say that there is no bullying. Pupils declare that they love their lessons; indeed, Year 2 pupils could not think of anything they did not like. Pupils were excited about trips out to learn in places like the local wildlife park or farm. Pupils understand the pledge

they have made through the 'golden promise', respecting others and taking responsibility for their actions and their learning. Consequently, incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare and there is little low-level disruption in lessons.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to raise expectations of the quality of written work that pupils will produce, including improving handwriting and presentation
- pupils receive more precise teaching to enable them to achieve greater depth in learning in writing
- all staff listen carefully to and sensitively correct pupils' misconceptions in a timely way to enable pupils to make more rapid progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I was able to discuss the work of the school with you and the deputy headteacher. We visited classrooms together to observe teaching and learning. I was able to look at pupils' work in books and to speak with pupils throughout the day. I heard pupils read. Discussions with the school improvement partner and four members of the governing body helped to provide me with additional information. School documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website were also taken into account. The views of 23 parents were taken into account through the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. I looked at the responses of nine staff to the school's own questionnaire.