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Mrs Tracie Langfield  
Acting Headteacher  
Millfields First School  
Swift Close  
Bromsgrove  
Worcestershire  
B61 7BS

Dear Mrs Langfield

### **Short inspection of Millfields First School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 December 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 March 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. While new to the role of acting headteacher for the term, your knowledge of the school runs deep following your time as deputy headteacher. Consequently, your views of the school's strengths and areas for improvement are accurate. Staff morale is high. Staff are treated with respect and are proud to teach at Millfields First School. Parents and carers overwhelmingly endorsed the school's strengths in their comments. Typical comments include, 'Teaching staff are professional, committed and genuinely care for the children', and, 'This is a first-class school led by an amazing team.'

Your school has continued to improve since the last inspection. Your subject leaders check the quality of teaching in their subjects rigorously and in many ways. This includes observing lessons, scrutinising teachers' plans, talking to pupils and looking at pupils' workbooks. Consequently, your subject leaders can identify where pupils' progress is best and where it could be better. Millfields works in collaboration with other local schools as part of a teaching school alliance. You and the headteacher of the teaching school stated that this is of great benefit to the school. Leaders support teachers in other schools and together share many professional development opportunities. The collaboration also benefits pupils by creating opportunities for them to work on joint projects across the schools.

This is a school that has its pupils at its heart. Because of the high quality of care provided by staff, pupils feel valued as individuals. They are confident that adults will listen to them and take their concerns seriously. The pupils I spoke to said that they

enjoy coming to school and that lessons are interesting. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the wide range of trips, events and visitors to the school. Your aim is to develop the 'whole child' through an ethos of high expectations, for both learning and behaviour. Pupils are taught, for example, to cooperate as part of a team and to be a good communicator. They are eloquent and talk with passion about their learning. Pupils' manners are exceptional. Throughout the day, pupils are polite and courteous to adults and their peers.

Pupils attain well in a range of subjects across the curriculum. Over the last three years, outcomes for pupils have improved. In 2018, pupils attained above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. Your plans include a clear focus to sustain and build on these achievements. You have identified the importance of broadening pupils' vocabulary, so that they can draw upon and accurately use a wider range of words. You recognise that pupils make mistakes in their spellings and that pupils across the school do not yet have a deep enough understanding of mathematical knowledge.

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to develop more opportunities for pupils to have a bigger say in their learning. Once a week, 'Friendly Friday' takes place in the afternoon. Pupils sign up for a range of activities, chosen by the pupils through the school council. Activities include cooking, cycling, arts and crafts, sports, training to become a play leader or digital leader, and learning simple canoeing skills called bell boating. Pupils work in groups, with older pupils helping and supporting younger ones. You have also introduced a change in the homework policy. Pupils now have a home learning activity where they can make a choice of what they want to find out about. This is as well as the regular homework of reading, mathematics and learning spellings and multiplication tables.

Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They provide challenge and support for leaders through their link role and through the questions they ask about information they receive on pupils' attainment and progress. They challenge leaders about the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, so that gaps between their progress and that of other pupils nationally continue to diminish. Governors understand their safeguarding responsibilities and undertake training to ensure that they meet their statutory duties.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You, your staff and governors ensure that pupils' safety and welfare are given high priority throughout the school. All staff have been suitably trained in line with government guidance, so that they know what action to take should they be concerned that a pupil might be at risk from harm.

All the necessary recruitment checks are carried out before adults can work in school and comprehensive safeguarding training is completed by all staff. Record keeping is meticulous. Safeguarding processes are reviewed by governors, who work effectively

with school leaders to ensure that the school's systems and procedures keep pupils safe.

All staff who completed the Ofsted survey felt that pupils are safe at school. Pupils told me about their online safety lessons. Key information about online safety is also shared with parents and carers. There is a range of welfare support available for pupils and families who require additional help. This support ensures that more vulnerable pupils are kept safe. When further help is needed, leaders act promptly, involve external agencies, and take the necessary steps to safeguard pupils.

## **Inspection findings**

- In addition to evaluating the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils, I looked at the progress made by disadvantaged pupils; the extent to which pupils in Years 3 and 4 build on the secure grounding they receive at key stage 1; and the learning and progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- The small number of disadvantaged pupils in most year groups means that the data must be treated with caution. Despite the good progress indicated by the data, you are not complacent. You have designed specific plans for these pupils. Every day, you put extra help in place to bridge gaps in learning and to improve key areas that impede progress. Support is also provided through after-school clubs, such as the Fun Club, which helps pupils with social and emotional needs. Teachers and leaders meet every half term to review the progress made by all pupils and identify any who need further help. They particularly focus on disadvantaged pupils. Staff work very closely with parents to keep plans under regular review. Disadvantaged pupils are well supported to help them overcome barriers to their learning and, as a result, they make good progress.
- As pupils move into key stage 2, they continue to build their skills and knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics and other subject areas. Teachers have high expectations for them. Leaders regularly check pupils' books to see that they are meeting the standards expected. Consequently, they also make good and better progress. Key stage 2 staff meet regularly with teachers in the middle schools to ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Staff also meet with teachers from local schools to compare standards and check their judgements. Work in pupils' books shows that they have opportunities to write at length and use grammar and punctuation appropriately. Pupils take as much care with their writing in topics as they do in English. However, pupils throughout the school do not always spell as accurately as they should.
- The teaching of mathematics is lively and engaging and allows pupils to make at least good progress. Work in the books is well set out. Pupils say that they enjoy mathematics, and this is shown in their positive attitudes to the subject. Examples were seen where teachers asked pupils challenging questions that demanded that they explain their answers. However, this is not done consistently across the school. Not all pupils have enough opportunities to reason and deepen their understanding.

- The inclusion leader is highly skilled and has a clear overview of the learning and progress of pupils with SEND. She regularly checks pupils' books to ensure that these pupils are making good progress. She works closely with all staff to identify pupils' difficulties, so that action can be taken at an early stage. Staff are well trained, so that they can support pupils in class as well as providing them with additional programmes to help them to overcome their difficulties. Workshops have been organised for parents to provide them with strategies to support their child. Pupils' workbooks show that teachers provide the right level of challenge for these pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND make good progress towards their targets.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils develop a range of strategies to improve the accuracy of their spellings, so that they do not repeat mistakes
- teachers provide pupils with more opportunities to deepen their understanding of mathematical knowledge.

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

Yours sincerely

Lynda Townsend  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and the acting deputy headteacher, senior leaders and the chair of governors. I spoke to the headteacher of the teaching school alliance and a representative of the local authority children's services. Together, you and I observed learning across the school, talking to children and staff as we did so. We looked at children's workbooks and cross-referenced this information with progress data. I took account of the 63 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 36 free-text comments. I spoke to 10 parents and considered the responses from the 12 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey. I analysed information about children's achievement, and reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including the school improvement and development plan and self-evaluation. I checked the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, including those relating to recruitment and background checks on all adults working in school.