

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Miss Rachel Skates  
Headteacher  
Mountford Manor Primary School  
Bothwell Road  
Walcot  
Swindon  
Wiltshire  
SN3 3EZ

Dear Miss Skates

### **Short inspection of Mountford Manor Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 2018 with Sue Ivermee, 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 the school was judged to be good in September 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You have motivated a like-minded team to improve pupils' outcomes in all year groups.

Significant improvement has been made to improve pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics. The successful application of a whole-school approach to pupils' mathematical development has resulted in well-above-average progress for pupils in Mountford Manor Primary School. The successful work in both these areas is demonstrated by much improved outcomes, particularly for the disadvantaged. Pupils describe how they are stretched and challenged to apply their reasoning in mathematics.

You have had a whole-school focus on developing pupils' writing. Pupils told us how much they enjoy their writing now. We saw them diligently listening to staff and each other in lessons. They were inspired by the story that they are following, learning to interpret the characters' 'thoughts' and 'feelings'. They then used this to develop strong figurative language in their writing. However, unlike for mathematics, pupils were less clear what they need to show in their writing to indicate what learning at greater depth might look like.

The pupils described to us how staff provide a range of engaging starting points for learning. Teachers have often chosen carefully considered texts to form the basis for learning across the curriculum and in English.

The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. Today the pupils in lower key stage 2 were 'evacuated'. They and staff took their roles seriously in replicating the Second World War evacuation of children from London. Their explanation of their experiences was carefully articulated, demonstrating that they had real empathy for how others might have felt. Through their literacy work relating to 'Peter Pan', and 'War Horse', pupils have identified what makes a good leader in the school and in society.

At the previous inspection, inspectors asked school leaders to improve the quality of pupils' writing so that their achievement in writing matched that for mathematics and reading. This has not been fully achieved yet. However, pupils now have an extended range of opportunities to develop their writing skills and are learning from their mistakes.

Leaders were also asked to set work that was suitably challenging, particularly for the most able. Although improving through the decisive actions that you have taken, you have rightly kept this as a key feature for school improvement.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You, other school leaders and the governing body have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school has an appropriate safeguarding policy, which staff understand and follow. The culture of safeguarding is strong.

You have ensured that staff are well trained in identifying and supporting pupils who face risks, including from radicalisation and extremism, sexual exploitation and when pupils go missing from education. Staff know how to report any concerns.

Leaders with specific responsibility for child protection are clear about how to refer cases to the local authority and the police, where appropriate. You are aware that some pupils do not attend school as often as they should and are working with other agencies to reduce pupils' persistent absence.

The trust ensures that external reviews of safeguarding are undertaken. Lessons are learned when deficiencies from best practice are found.

### **Inspection findings**

- The first area of the school's work we explored focused on what you and other leaders have done to improve the quality of pupils' writing. You have taken on board the changes that needed to be made to teaching, learning and assessment following the previous inspection. Teachers provide feedback to pupils about their work that enables them to learn from their mistakes, which they do. Staff have embraced with enthusiasm the changes that have been made. Pupils are very motivated to produce good-quality writing in their 'golden envelopes', following their careful and detailed editing and proofreading. The quality of pupils' writing is improving. Nevertheless, it still remains as a key focus for the school. We agreed that accelerated progress in writing is needed for the most able pupils

across the school and in key stage 1 in particular, to ensure stronger progress by the end of key stage 2.

- The second area we considered was how well children are being prepared for Year 1, particularly the most able and disadvantaged. During our inspection visit we saw how the children in the early years foundation stage were enjoying their time in school. They experience a wide range of activities. Staff use a good range of strategies to consolidate and extend children's learning. The development of children's phonic understanding helps them to learn to read and spell. Staff make sure that pupils' misconceptions are corrected quickly. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1 learning and develop a strong understanding of the alphabet code to segment and blend sounds. This includes those children who are the most able and those who are disadvantaged.
- Children in the early years are cared for and protected by staff. However, there is some inconsistency in the expectation of children's behaviour across the provision in the different rooms. You recognise the need for greater uniformity and have plans in place to tackle this.
- Next we looked at what the school was doing to enable pupils to learn so well in mathematics. Pupils follow a three-step approach of 'Do it', where new skills are linked to a learning objective; 'Secure it', where pupils are required to explain in words their reasoning; and finally, 'Deepen it'. This includes small steps to apply their learning to new examples.
- The new ways that mathematics is being taught have ensured that pupils' progress and standards when they leave Year 6 are much higher than seen nationally over the last two years. Likewise, pupils' achievements in spelling, punctuation and grammar are a strength of the school. This has not been at the expense of other national curriculum subjects.
- Our final area of interest was pupils' attendance. Pupils' attendance is improving. Some pupils do not attend school as often as they could because of medical appointments or because they are not well enough. There are still some pupils who are not attending as often as they are able to. For example, a number of families still persist in taking their children on extended holidays in school time. You, members of the trust working with local churches and imams are working hard to encourage these and other families to make sure that their children get the education to which they are entitled. There has been some success, but you are keenly aware that more needs to be done. You have this as a key point of action in your school's improvement plan.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in writing is accelerated, particularly for those in key stage 1, and the most able throughout the school
- children's development is even stronger across their time in the early years foundation stage, particularly their behaviour for learning
- pupils' attendance improves and fewer are persistently absent from school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, the chief executive officer of the White Horse Federation Multi-academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Swindon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steffi Penny  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

At the start of the inspection we agreed the timetable and activities for the day. Together we considered a wide range of documentary evidence in the school and the nursery, including records relating to safeguarding, the curriculum, assessment information, the school's self-evaluation and development plans.

Inspectors had discussions with pupils, parents, teachers and the chair of the local governing body. They also met with the primary director and the chief executive officer of the White Horse Federation Multi-academy Trust.

Inspectors conducted observations of pupils learning, some jointly with the school's leaders. The inspectors scrutinised the quality of pupils' work, and the records of pupils' achievements. They listened to pupils reading in class and talked with pupils about their work and life in school.

The inspectors took account of the 35 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The 43 responses by pupils to Ofsted's electronic questionnaire were considered, as were the 22 responses submitted by staff.