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Mrs Angela Bogle  
Headteacher  
Mytham Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Bogle

### **Short inspection of Mytham Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 18 July 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 February 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. During this time, the number of pupils has increased and the premises have been extended to provide more learning spaces for pupils. You have invested in the improvement of outdoor facilities and created positive, vibrant learning environments, both indoors and outdoors. You are due to open a nursery in September, which will enable you to extend the 'Mytham offer' to the wider community. Most importantly, you, your senior leadership team and governors have created a school where pupils enjoy learning and are happy.

Parents are very supportive of the school and are happy to recommend the school to others. Parents value the work of leaders and teachers and said that they are welcoming, communicative and willing to 'go the extra mile'. Parents commented that in addition to academic developments they have seen how their children's 'confidence, social skills and interest in the community and nature have blossomed' under your guidance.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive in support of the school and your leadership. Staff believe that the school is well led by an 'inspirational' leader and all are proud to work at Mytham. Staff believe that children are at the heart of all that the school does and feel that they 'challenge children to their full potential and beyond'. Staff wholeheartedly believe in the values of the school and endorse the school's motto, 'Mytham is more than just a school.'

You and your leadership team are keenly aware of the school's strengths and the areas which need further development. You are aspirational for the school and its pupils. You already have clear improvement plans in place to address the issues raised in this inspection. This demonstrates an honest evaluation of recent outcomes for pupils amid significant changes at school and national levels in terms of curriculum and assessment demands. The local authority has been a valuable source of support in evaluating the school's work and the role of governors. This support has helped you and governors to move forwards apace. Governors are highly committed to their work and passionate about the school, and they know the school well. They hold you and your team firmly to account to ensure that Mytham continues to deliver high-quality education to pupils.

Governors and senior leaders have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. At that time, inspectors identified the need to improve the quality of teaching in order to become consistently good or better. In response, you have ensured that leaders follow up development points with teachers so that previous suggestions for improvement are tackled. You monitor the work of teachers through a comprehensive appraisal system, which takes into account lesson observations, analysis of pupils' work and assessment information.

You have also focused on ensuring that teachers make regular checks on what pupils are learning in the lesson and that they use this information to improve their teaching further. You have introduced milestone checks, which teachers use in mathematics, reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar so that they know clearly the progress that pupils make. As a result, activities and plans are matched appropriately to the needs of pupils and any underachievement is identified quickly so that support can be put into place.

Following the previous inspection, you developed a new marking and feedback policy, which is applied consistently by teachers. You ensure that pupils have time to reflect on this feedback and that younger pupils are given additional support, so that pupils' redrafting of their work is meaningful and moves their learning on.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is a true strength of the school. A culture of vigilance, care and support runs throughout the school. Leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils and their families who need early help, receive it. You work closely with families and external agencies and are tenacious in following up any concerns to ensure that your pupils are safe.

All safeguarding arrangements are robust and rigorous. Staff are well trained in recent issues and know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, both personally and online. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the dangers of the internet and social media and know how to deal with cyber bullying and requests for personal information. Pupils said that bullying rarely occurs, but, if it does, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by teachers. Pupils, parents and staff have the utmost confidence in leaders' ability to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for.

## Inspection findings

- We agreed that during the inspection I would focus on the progress being made by pupils in key stages 1 and 2, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, how effective leaders have been in addressing previous areas for improvement and the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the values of Mytham permeate all aspects of school life. The vision that children become 'Mytham STARS – successful, thoughtful, ambitious, responsible, strong in mind, strong in body, strong together' creates articulate, polite, caring pupils who are well prepared for the future. This vision is seen in action throughout the school through displays, assemblies, awards and 'focus of the week' topics. Pupils of all ages talked confidently about the focus of 'courage', from Year 6 pupils preparing for secondary school, to Reception pupils who were completing obstacle courses and drawing pictures of 'brave' people.
- The early years team has been successful in improving outcomes so that the majority of children achieve a good level of development, typically in line with national averages. Despite a dip in attainment this year, this still represents good progress for most children from their low starting points, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and reading.
- Attainment in the Year 1 phonics check is just below the national average this year. Previous years' results have typically been well above the national average. Leaders are already ensuring that detailed interventions are in place to make sure that pupils are well prepared and successful in the use of phonics by the end of Year 2.
- In Year 2, the proportion of boys attaining the expected standards and greater depth in reading and writing improved this year. The proportion of girls working at greater depth in writing also improved, but the proportion of girls reaching age-related expectations in writing dipped in 2017. Leaders have successfully improved attainment for targeted groups in the past and are confident that this issue will be remedied through curriculum changes, interventions and timely support for pupils to ensure that they are on track for future success.
- Progress by the end of key stage 1 is slower in mathematics than in other subjects in 2017. The progress of current pupils in Year 1 presents a more positive picture and shows the impact of leaders' work in this area. Leaders are working closely with parents, through the Parent Forum, to streamline homework and make sure that the tasks set are effective in improving the skills, knowledge and understanding of pupils.
- By the end of key stage 2, pupils typically achieve in line with their expectations, based on their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. The provisional results for 2017 show that attainment in all subjects has improved considerably, so that the vast majority of pupils reach the standards expected for their age, and a considerable number of pupils reach the higher standards of 'greater depth' in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in writing is particularly strong. As a result, pupils are entering high school well prepared for their next steps.
- Pupils talked confidently about how much they enjoy their lessons and said that they find learning 'fun'. They spoke highly of the calm and supportive nature of teachers and feel that they can ask for help when needed. Pupils are engaged in their learning and

behave well, both in lessons and in social times. Pupils are respectful and thoughtful in their dealings with others.

- Attendance of pupils is in line with the national average. Leaders work closely with families and external agencies to improve the attendance of all pupils, but particularly that of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, current attendance information shows a marked improvement in attendance for the latter group. There has been a significant reduction in the number of pupils whose attendance falls below 90%. Leaders' work in this area has made a positive difference to the attendance of some groups of pupils, but the attendance of disadvantaged pupils needs to improve further.
- Your work on reducing persistent absence has been very effective, and the school now has only a small number of pupils who are regularly absent. You work tirelessly to improve attendance but, despite this, the number of pupils missing learning as a result of holidays taken during term time is a concern for leaders and governors. Work with families to stress the importance of not missing valuable learning time is ongoing and a high priority for the school.
- Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils are aware of the importance of British values and talk with confidence about democracy and the rule of law, linking today's politics with how their election of school council representatives was conducted. Pupils are developing into well-rounded young people who care for each other and respect each other, regardless of differences. They know about other religions and can talk confidently about what they have learned from their lessons and from visits to mosques, churches and temples. Pupils welcome the many opportunities available to take on extra responsibilities, from being play leaders, buddies or school council representatives to ringing the school bell.
- Across the school, governors, leaders and staff work cohesively as a team to provide a good quality of education for pupils. Leadership is strong and promotes a happy, caring and safe learning environment where pupils are the priority of all.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes for key stage 1 improve, particularly in mathematics and girls' writing
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen O'Neill  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and your senior leaders. In addition, I met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I met formally with a group of pupils from across the school and talked informally with others around the school and in lessons.

You accompanied me on visits to classes where we observed teaching and learning, spoke with pupils and looked at the work in some pupils' books. I examined a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, attendance and the school's assessment data of pupils' progress and attainment. I also scrutinised a range of policies and the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation report. I undertook a review of the school's website, which complies with government regulations.

As part of the inspection, I considered the views expressed by parents in the 34 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as comments received via the free-text facility on Parent View. I also spoke with parents informally on the playground. I took into account the 45 responses to a questionnaire for staff.