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Mr Iain Jones  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Jones

### **Short inspection of Menston Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 24 April 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 February 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You continue to set high standards and have a clear vision for improvement. You are well supported by your highly committed deputy headteacher as you strive to improve the school further. You place great importance on pupils' academic achievement as well as developing their wider skills. The staff I spoke to support you on this journey of improvement. Staff told me that they are always looking for ways to enhance their teaching. They appreciate the opportunities you provide for staff training and development. One member of staff said: 'We are not complacent. We are always looking for ways to improve.' Another teacher said, 'We strive to be the best we can be.'

Pupils told me that they enjoy their learning, including the range of enrichment opportunities made available to them. They regularly attend school. Consequently, pupils' attendance is consistently above the national average. One pupil told me that 'teachers create memories for us'. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They support each other. For example, pupils help each other in mathematics lessons. As a result of high expectations of pupils' presentation and handwriting, pupils take pride in their written work.

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school. Most parents hold very positive views about the school. One parent said, 'The school is friendly and welcoming'. Another

said, 'Children are motivated to learn and are taught enthusiastically'. However, a small number of parents hold less positive views about the school. For example, some expressed concern about recent staff turnover. A small number feel that incidents of bullying are not dealt with effectively.

You have focused on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Teaching of mathematics has improved. The use of mathematical equipment is a regular feature of lessons. Pupils told me that this helps them. You have ensured a consistent focus on developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills across year groups. As a result, outcomes in mathematics have improved. In 2017, Year 6 pupils' progress was above the national average. An increasing number of pupils achieve at greater depth in key stage 1 and at the higher standard in key stage 2.

An area for improvement at the last inspection was to ensure that most-able pupils are challenged in their learning. Pupils told me that they do feel challenged. As a result, in 2017, 20% of Year 6 pupils achieved the higher standard in the reading, writing and mathematics combined measure, which was well above the national average of 9%. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for secondary school. However, you acknowledge that there is still work to do to ensure that more boys achieve a greater depth of understanding in writing, particularly in Years 3 and 4.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders, including governors, have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Your deputy headteacher ensures that staff and governor training is updated regularly. Staff understand the important role they play in keeping pupils safe. Since the previous inspection, your new electronic system for recording safeguarding and behaviour information has improved record-keeping. You ensure that incidents and the actions taken are well recorded.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. All parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children feel happy and safe in school. School records show that bullying is infrequent. Pupils told me bullying is rare and when it does happen they are confident that staff will take action. However, a small number of pupils who responded to the online pupil survey feel that bullying can persist after a member of staff has been informed.

Some issues with leaders' recording and updating of information relating to checks on a contractor were addressed during the inspection.

### **Inspection findings**

- I wanted to find out why boys' attainment in reading and writing was not as strong as that of girls, particularly at a greater depth of understanding in key stages 1 and 2 in writing. You have rightly made the development of a consistent

approach to writing across the school a main priority. You have introduced more varied texts as a stimulus for writing. Linking some writing projects to outdoor learning is helping to encourage boys' enjoyment of writing. Teachers make it clear to pupils what successful writing looks like. Pupils in key stage 2 have regular opportunities to edit and re-draft their work. They told me that this helps them to learn from their mistakes. They enjoy improving their work and are given clear guidance from their teachers. As a result, current school information shows that boys' attainment in writing is improving, particularly for middle prior-attaining boys in Years 5 and 6. However, you acknowledge that there is still work to do to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to improve their written work in key stage 1 and to write at greater length across the curriculum. You have rightly identified the need to develop boys' writing skills further in Years 3 and 4.

- Pupils' outcomes in phonics have been consistently above the national average for the last three years. Inspection evidence shows that pupils use and apply their phonics skills securely. You have created a culture of reading across the school. Subsequently, pupils develop a love of reading. They read with confidence. Pupils told me that they can access books regularly as every classroom has a library. They appreciate the high-quality books available. As a result, current school information shows that attainment in reading in key stages 1 and 2 continues to improve. More Year 6 boys this year are on track to achieve the higher standard in reading.
- Since the previous inspection, you have developed the skills of middle leaders. Opportunities to work with other staff within the Two Valleys Learning Collaborative have enhanced middle leaders' skills. However, you acknowledge that due to recent changes in staffing there is still work to do to develop middle leaders' skills further. You understand that middle leaders need more ownership of school assessment information so that they can judge the effect of new strategies on pupils' progress. You rightly acknowledge that middle leaders need to develop their role in raising pupil achievement.
- Systems to check on the progress of pupils in all year groups have improved since the last inspection. As a result, you are able to quickly identify any pupils at risk of underachievement. You regularly share this information with governors, comparing pupils' outcomes at Menston Primary School with those of pupils in similar schools and against national averages. This means that governors understand the school's strengths. They also are well aware of the areas for improvement. Governors challenge leaders effectively to address these.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to improve their written work in key stage 1
- more frequent opportunities are provided for pupils to write at greater length in subjects other than English

- boys' attainment in writing continues to improve, so that more achieve a greater depth of understanding, particularly in Years 3 and 4
- the skills of middle leaders are further improved to develop their role in raising pupil achievement.

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

Yours sincerely

Michele Costello

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I made brief visits to all year groups with you and the deputy headteacher. I also looked at the work in pupils' books with you and the Year 3 and Year 6 teachers. I met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also met with your school improvement partner. I heard a pupil from each of Year 4 and Year 5 read. I took account of the 94 responses from parents to Parent View, and the 91 free-text comments. I also took into account the 16 responses to the Ofsted online staff survey and the 103 responses to the online pupil survey. I met with a group of staff. I talked informally to pupils during lessons. I met formally with pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. I spoke to parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day. I examined a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation, assessment information, governors' minutes, attendance and behaviour logs, and safeguarding information.