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Mrs Naomi Snowdon
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Snowdon

Short inspection of Moulton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 March 2016, 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 2011.

This school continues to be good.

You have significantly improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the last inspection. This has been a challenging time for the school because it has expanded to educate pupils to the end of key stage 2. For the past three years, outcomes attained by Year 6 pupils have continually improved. Your determined leadership has created a school where academic achievement, pupils' enjoyment of learning and their well-being are equal priorities. By the time pupils left the school at the end of Year 6 in 2015, they had made good progress and their attainment in reading and mathematics was significantly above that of all pupils nationally.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of activities that are carefully planned to build their resilience, enhance their learning and keep them safe. For example, in the autumn term they worked with a visiting singing group to think about not giving up on their dreams, used their superheroes as models for developing perseverance and enjoyed the music of a samba band. The school council led an assembly on preventing bullying and junior road safety officers worked with the local 'speed watch' team to understand the risks of speeding.

Your talent for recognising the potential of staff and empowering them to lead aspects of the school's work is evident in the quality of the current leadership team. A member of staff said 'there is not a day when I don't want to come to work; I feel totally valued and my strengths are used to their full potential'. The two leaders of

English were appointed to this role at the start of the academic year; nevertheless they have established a detailed understanding of the quality of provision and are providing good support to staff. As a result, where standards in writing did not meet your high expectations in 2015, significant improvement is evident in the quality of teaching and in the progress pupils are making. Additionally, the high profile given to improving the teaching of core literacy skills in the early years and key stage 1 means that an above-average proportion of pupils are on track to reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. Children currently in the Reception class are making very good progress in developing their understanding of letter sounds and how to use them to spell increasingly complex words.

Since the last inspection, through setting high expectations and making robust challenge to staff where necessary, you have continually improved the quality of teaching. Aspects requiring improvement, identified in the report, have been addressed. Pupils in most classes have a very good understanding of how well they are doing and are helped well by their teachers, in lessons and through written feedback, to know what they need to do next to improve their work. Where this work is less effective, guidance given to pupils is too general to help them make the next steps in their learning quickly.

Working closely with the deputy headteacher, you have ensured the higher standards expected in the new national curriculum are understood. Systems in place to track and analyse pupils' progress are efficient and allow you to identify those who are at risk of falling behind. You are both very clear that you expect the quality of daily teaching in classrooms to be adapted to meet the range of pupils' needs effectively. Where teaching falls short of the expected standards, teachers are given support in class and through observing other teachers to help them improve.

Pupils behave well in lessons, as they move around school and at playtime. Displays of work investigating the values they are encouraged to understand and explore show that these are taught well. Pupils know what being compassionate, generous and humble mean, as well as being encouraged to develop resilience in the face of challenge and to be resourceful in their learning. Pupils say they feel happy and safe at school, although at times some do not feel they are challenged enough. Pupils' enjoyment of school is demonstrated by their low levels of absence. Attendance is above the national average, children looked after are rarely absent and disadvantaged pupils' attendance is similar to that of other pupils.

Parents are complimentary about the quality of your work and overwhelmingly supportive of the impact the school has on their children's progress. A range of strategies help parents to support their children at home. These enhance the work done by the school and help to secure good and better progress. In a free-text response to the inspection, a parent said 'the teachers are passionate and motivated and my child feels inspired and eager to learn'.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors ensure safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Processes in place to check staff suitability to work with children are managed efficiently and monitored well by the governor responsible for safeguarding. Child protection training is up to date for all staff and logs are kept to show that new staff have received effective guidance until full training can be arranged. Records show that concerns are logged and referrals to other professional agencies are made as necessary. Strong support is given to pupils who are looked after by the local authority both in school and through liaison with other services.

Leaders and governors work to understand what risks pupils may face as they grow up in the local area and ensure appropriate training is in place to enable staff to recognise these and to take action where necessary, for example through the 'Prevent' training to raise awareness and understanding of the risks associated with extremism.

The previous inspection identified that written policies did not meet requirements. This has been addressed, and policies are up to date. Although some policies on the school's website are not dated showing full governing body approval, the original copies held in school are maintained as required by law.

Inspection findings

- Working closely with the deputy headteacher, you provide rigorous and determined leadership. Your evaluation of the work of the school, arrived at through careful monitoring, is accurate and development planning addresses priorities well. For example, staff have worked together to analyse boys' writing, using examples of good progress to understand how to inspire boys to write more successfully. As a result, the quality of writing is improving and all pupils are making better progress.
- The expertise of leaders is used well to drive improvement. The deputy headteacher has raised expectations in mathematics and ensured pupils have good resources to support their work. The relatively new English subject leaders are inspiring and supporting teachers and pupils to improve the quality of writing. Staff receive good guidance and training on how to improve their work; for example through the implementation of approaches to writing which carefully model to pupils what is expected.
- Leaders regularly review the quality of teaching using lesson observations, progress information and scrutiny of pupils' work. Sometimes you monitor specific aspects of teachers' responsibilities like the quality and use of the learning environment; sometimes the overall quality of a lesson or the impact of teaching over time. Teachers receive useful feedback which helps them to improve. Although analysis of pupils' progress enables you to identify pupils at risk of falling behind, some of the monitoring in class does not look carefully enough at how well different groups of pupils are supported to learn well and so useful information is missed.

- Children make a good start to their education. Staff in the early years have significantly improved how early literacy and numeracy skills are taught. Children make good progress in learning to read and write, they spell simple words using letter sounds competently and are confident to tackle unknown words when they read and when they spell them. Children enjoy a range of activities both indoors and outside. In a few instances these do not help them to make the most of their imaginative and investigative skills. Plans are being developed to improve the outdoor area because it is not maintained or resourced to a high standard, which limits the quality of the learning opportunities that can be offered. Children settle well and quickly. Learning and progress are carefully tracked and analysed; teachers use this information to plan activities that move learning on very well.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive a range of support appropriate to their needs. This includes support for their academic progress and their well-being. The deputy headteacher's good analysis of achievement, together with the special educational needs coordinator's targeting of intervention where it is needed, is closing the gaps between disadvantaged pupils' attainment and that of other pupils. Their work is also ensuring that pupils with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points.
- The quality of the curriculum is good and well supported by a range of activities. Subjects are taught through carefully planned themes and pupils learn well because links between different areas of their learning are meaningful. Pupils say they love the investigations and practical work in science and would like to do more. Evidence in their books shows that some year groups are not offered very frequent opportunities to experiment in this way. In some classes and subjects, pupils do not think through enough for themselves how to set out and present practical and investigatory and comparative work.
- Pupils enjoy learning about other cultures and religions. They understand that these have an impact on how people live and behave; this is further developed through lessons which encourage them to understand British values such as respect and tolerance. The recently appointed leader of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education has audited how well these aspects of the curriculum are taught and is putting together a well-structured curriculum plan to ensure understanding is built on as pupils move through the school. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils were discussing how they could resist being bribed to do something they didn't want to. Supported effectively by their teacher, they developed a good understanding of the strategies and support they could use in such a situation.
- Governors are led effectively; they use their skills and expertise to support and challenge you and other leaders well. They have established links with classes to keep in touch with how pupils' welfare is managed and how well pupils are progressing. They also take responsibility for monitoring a school improvement priority each to see how well these are being addressed. The deputy headteacher provides a detailed and effective analysis of pupils' achievement once national outcomes are published. This helps governors to gain a very sound perspective of how well pupils are achieving in comparison with others nationally. They know how well the pupil premium

helps disadvantaged pupils to achieve, and they monitor the good use of the primary sports funding. Safeguarding is monitored carefully so that governors can be assured processes are robust. Governors know, through the information you share, that staff are rewarded appropriately for their performance.

- Leaders work well with those in other schools. Examples of the school's work are used to support other schools to improve. The deputy headteacher uses collaborative work with others very well to ensure assessment is accurate and to develop practice across schools. You have found the support of the local authority adviser appointed to work with you this year effective in analysing your work, challenging you to improve yet further and endorsing the quality of the school's outcomes.

Next steps for the school

In order to improve teaching and learning even further, leaders and governors should ensure that:

- leaders provide more detailed feedback to teachers about how well different groups of pupils are doing in their lessons
- all teachers use the information they gather about how well pupils are learning to help them move on in the next lesson
- all teachers give feedback to pupils, in lessons and against their work, that is sharply focused on what they need to do to improve
- plans to improve the early years outdoor area are implemented so activities outdoors can match the quality of those indoors.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education for the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Prue Rayner
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I observed 10 parts of lessons with you and the deputy headteacher, scrutinised school documents and met with a number of leaders to discuss their work. I also held discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body, a group of pupils and the local authority adviser working with the school. I looked at pupils' books in classrooms during lessons and spoke to pupils about their learning and their enjoyment of school. I spoke to parents as they collected their children from school and took account of the 24 views expressed on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 11 free-text responses made during the inspection. I also took account of 15 responses made by staff to the Ofsted questionnaire and the 16 responses from pupils.