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Mrs Karen Croskery
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Croskery

Short inspection of Moorbridge

Following my visit to the school on 13 September 2017 with Tricia Stevens, 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the pupil referral unit (the school) since the last inspection. You, your senior leaders, including members of the management committee, and staff are highly aspirational for the pupils. Leaders, as a matter of course, compare the achievements of Moorbridge's pupils at the end of key stage 4 to the achievements of mainstream pupils nationally. No excuses are made. You and your team understand that pupils should make rapid and sustained progress in your highly specialised provision.

Leaders' decisive action to remodel the workforce has resulted in more distributed leadership. The subject leaders for English, mathematics and science, together with the coordinator for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SENCo), took up their roles at Easter and are beginning to see the positive impact of their initial improvement work.

Your evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate. Leaders understand the school's strengths and areas for further development. You, quite correctly, have identified the need to develop and embed new assessment procedures, check the impact of intervention activities more carefully and develop a culture of reading in school.

You and your staff worked tirelessly to ensure that pupils in both key stages 3 and 4 started the current academic year in one school building. The increased space is paying dividends. Adults and pupils have noticed that the learning environment is even calmer since the beginning of term. Pupils told me that they appreciate the recreation and reflection spaces that they can access now.

You have developed strong and productive relationships with the staff and leaders of the schools at which your pupils are dually registered. This is exemplified by the number of senior leaders from secondary provisions in the borough who are members of the school's management committee. This ensures a true partnership in which all act in the best interests of the pupils.

Pupils thrive at Moorbridge, academically, socially and emotionally, because of the bespoke provision that you and your staff provide. The very high adult-to-pupil ratio results in pupils making good progress because their individual needs are identified and met in a timely manner. You support staff well to improve their practice through the provision of high-quality training opportunities that are matched closely to their identified needs. This was the key area for improvement at the time of the previous inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. All staff access regular safeguarding training and can explain how they keep their pupils safe in education. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. Pupils trust your staff implicitly. They told both inspectors that they would report any problems or concerns immediately to any member of staff.

Pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe online is good. Your school's website provides a wealth of information, and hyperlinks to specific information for parents about how to keep their children safe as they interact with social media, such as Facebook and Snapchat.

Inspection findings

- Pupils, all of whom have social, emotional and mental health issues, behave extremely well in and around school. They told the inspectors that they feel safe. Your staff keep detailed logs of the small number of behavioural incidents that do occur. Pupils respond well to the school's rewards and sanctions. For example, a pupil was delighted to receive a golden ticket to access the recreation room during the inspection.
- Staff work diligently with individual pupils and their families to improve attendance. Pupils' attendance improved markedly from 79% in the 2015/16 academic year to 83% in 2016/17 as a result of actions undertaken by you and your staff. Leaders, although pleased with the improvement, are not satisfied. New initiatives, such as partnership work with the Newcastle United Foundation, continue to be implemented in order to raise the school's attendance percentage to at least equal the national average for mainstream secondary schools.
- You have outlined the correct priorities for improvement in the school's self-evaluation and action planning. Your staff understand fully that the new assessment procedures require embedding, especially in key stage 3.
- Overall, the majority of pupils make good progress in English language from their starting points at the end of key stage 2 and especially from their entry to the school.

Leaders, quite rightly, have identified the need to instil a love of reading in the pupils and improve the reading culture throughout the school.

- Leaders, in response to disappointing mathematics and science results in 2017, took swift action to review the curriculum, consult stakeholders and implement changes. The new subject leaders for English, mathematics and science have sought, and continue to value, external support to ensure that the school's provision meets pupils' needs fully. For example, the subject leader for mathematics has liaised effectively with the local authority's advisory teacher for mathematics, other leaders of mathematics throughout the North Tyneside Learning Trust and staff in the regional mathematics hub. In addition, teachers and teaching assistants have attended bespoke training in mathematics. As a result of teachers' increased mathematical knowledge and expertise, pupils are beginning to make more rapid progress.
- There is a teacher and a teaching assistant in every class of up to 10 pupils. Each pupil receives bespoke attention in every lesson. Their individual needs are met well. Misunderstandings are addressed immediately and harder work provided where necessary. This personalised provision is a huge strength of the school. One Year 8 pupil told me that the very small classes enable her to get help quickly and, as a result, she is making more rapid progress at Moorbridge than in her mainstream school.
- The highly experienced SENCo took up post at Easter and has revitalised the provision. For example, systems and procedures to apply for education, health and care plans (EHCPs) have been overhauled and staff training provided. As a result, all staff now contribute confidently and willingly to applications for new EHCPs and meetings with professionals and parents. You and the SENCo have identified the need to measure the impact of intervention activities more incisively, to establish if they lead to rapid progress for pupils and are, in fact, good value for money.
- Information from the school's data tracking system shows that pupils' emotional health improves strongly over time at Moorbridge. The school's aspirational leaders have developed plans to introduce mindfulness work in order to improve the emotional and mental health of all pupils even further.
- Despite only completing the move into the current building last week, the learning environment is calm and orderly. Pupils revel in the extra space to which they now have access. You acknowledge that the building is not yet fully fit for purpose; the playground for example is very small and unenticing. You have ambitious plans for the further development of the physical environment for your very vulnerable pupils.
- Twenty-one pupils, who are either new to the borough, permanently excluded or at risk of permanent exclusion, attend alternative provision at the Personal Achievement and Learning Service (PALS) that is based in North Tyneside. You liaise closely with leaders at PALS to ensure that these pupils are safeguarded at all times. You receive and monitor achievement reports for these pupils on a weekly basis. Destination data shows their vocational training stands them in good stead to enter further education or workplace training.
- North Tyneside local authority commission the school to provide hospital and home tuition for secondary pupils within North Tyneside. Your staff deliver the work that is set by each pupil's school. Although such work assignments are small in number,

parents are positive about this provision.

- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They told an inspector that your school really makes a difference to their children's lives. One said, 'The school does not get the recognition it deserves for the work that it does.' Another reported being delighted when their child achieved nine GCSE passes, including an A* in English. A group of parents agreed that attending Moorbridge had improved the life chances of their children.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a greater proportion of pupils attend school every day
- the new assessment procedures are embedded, especially in key stage 3
- the new subject leaders for English, mathematics and science receive continued support to develop their leadership roles
- the impact of intervention activities is measured incisively
- a culture of reading as a pleasurable and worthwhile activity is developed across both key stages
- the new building is equipped and resourced fully.

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

Yours sincerely

Belita Scott

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I discussed the work of the school with you, the deputy headteacher, the SENCo, subject leaders and six members of the management committee, including the chair and vice-chair. In addition, I met with the lead teacher for hospital and home tuition and the manager of PALS. I checked a range of documentation including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the school's development plan. I examined information about pupils' achievement and minutes of meetings of the governing body. I also considered the results of the surveys that were completed by pupils, parents and staff in July 2017. An inspector met with the safeguarding team, analysed the school's staff recruitment records and other safeguarding documents. Both inspectors visited classes to observe teaching, learning and assessment, alongside you and the deputy headteacher. Members of the inspection team checked the progress made by pupils in their workbooks, talked formally with groups of key stage 3 and 4 pupils and talked more informally to pupils in lessons and at breaktime about their learning. An inspector read

with three pupils in Year 8.