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Mr Rob Partington
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Dear Mr Partington

Short inspection of New Moston Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 October 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Together you have built a harmonious learning community where pupils are encouraged to reach their full potential both academically and personally. The respect that pupils show for each other is clear. In my meeting with pupils they told me, 'No matter what colour skin we have, or who we love or which gender we love, we should all be treated equally.'

Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced unavoidable staff turbulence in key stage 1. You and the deputy headteacher have dealt with this admirably. You provide staff with a wide range of training opportunities that help them in all aspects of their work, ensuring that the quality of teaching is almost always good or better. Senior leaders encourage pupils and staff alike to aim high. As a result, pupils develop a love of learning and are ambitious in their career aspirations. Staff morale is high.

You and your deputy headteacher have an accurate, reflective and honest view of the school's strengths and priorities. You are determined to improve the school further and you have high expectations of what you can achieve. The chair of the governing body is also clear about what needs to improve further. From minutes of governing body meetings it is clear to see that governors ask pertinent questions to enable them to judge the effectiveness of the leaders' work. This gives them a clear understanding of how they can support and challenge you in order to improve the school further. The leadership team is aware, for example, of the need to develop

key stage 1 leaders' roles more fully. This is to improve further the quality of teaching and learning in English across the curriculum. Leaders have set ambitious targets to increase the proportion of pupils attaining greater depth in reading and writing.

At the previous inspection in 2013 you were asked to raise achievement further by developing clear strategies to support the higher-ability pupils. From 2017 provisional key stage 2 information, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher national standard was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This was the second consecutive year that Year 6 pupils exceeded the national average in writing. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching the higher standards in reading and writing was higher than the national average for other pupils in 2017. However, disadvantaged pupils' attainment in mathematics is lower than that of others nationally.

You were also asked, in the previous inspection report, to increase the amount of progress that pupils make in key stage 1 to match that seen in the early years and in key stage 2. In key stage 1 in 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was above that seen nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard in mathematics was higher than the national average. However, the proportion reaching the higher standard in writing was slightly below the national average. Although this represented good progress from these pupils' starting points, their progress was still not as strong as that of pupils in key stage 2. This is as a result of the turbulence in staffing.

You and your staff continue to ensure that children get off to a flying start in the early years. Parents told me how well their children have settled into both the Nursery and Reception classes and this was clear for me to see during the course of the inspection. The vast majority of parents are very happy to have chosen this school for their children. Using Ofsted's Parent View free-text service, parents expressed their appreciation for staff 'making school fun'. This was also an expression used by several pupils when I talked to them informally during breaktimes.

Safeguarding is effective.

The deputy headteacher, in her role as the designated safeguarding leader, works tirelessly to ensure that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. She has improved the procedures for reporting concerns and staff understand these procedures. Together with the office manager, she ensures that all necessary checks are made on the suitability of staff to work with children. As I found out when I arrived at the start of the inspection, there are effective procedures to check on those visiting school. A leaflet providing information on the school's safeguarding procedures is issued to visitors when they sign in.

The promotion of safeguarding throughout the school has a high profile. Your designated safeguarding leader ensures that training is up to date so that staff and governors understand the current guidance. Safeguarding is an important part of the

induction packs given to new staff at whatever point in the year that they start. The designated safeguarding leader is prompt in making referrals to the local authority. She is rigorous in following up requests to make sure that pupils are kept safe from potential dangers. External agencies provide expertise to support pupils' welfare as and when necessary. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- The first line of enquiry that I explored during this inspection was to find out what leaders are doing to reduce the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school. I was concerned about the number of pupils who had been persistently absent last year, and the low attendance rates of disadvantaged pupils, those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and boys.
- You provided me with strong evidence to demonstrate how you and your governors have taken action to improve attendance. During the last academic year you appointed a new attendance officer, who works effectively with vulnerable pupils and their families. She works closely with your parent support manager to provide support for 108 pupils and their families. This support includes home visits, meetings with parents, liaising with the school nurse, linking with local authority attendance projects and the launch of the 'Here Every day Ready On time' (HERO) initiative across the school.
- From the start of term, in comparison with the same period last year, there has been a reduction in the number of pupils who are regularly absent from school. Staff have helped to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. However, there are still some families who do not fully appreciate the link between high attendance and the progress that pupils make.
- The second line of enquiry related to the teaching of phonics. The proportion of Year 1 pupils achieving the required standard in the phonics screening check in 2017 was lower than the previous year. You have effectively reviewed the way in which phonics is taught and there is now a whole-school approach that provides better continuity for pupils as they move from one year to the next.
- Together, we visited several phonics sessions in the early years and key stage 1. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in the way they teach phonics. Pupils are highly engaged. In Year 1, pupils clearly enjoyed joining in with the teacher with key words using the 'ee' sound, as she told the story of the farmer in the 'jeep', herding the 'sheep' and planting the 'seeds'. Staff closely monitor the progress that pupils make in phonics. In Year 2 guided reading sessions, pupils used their knowledge of phonics confidently to work out unfamiliar words like 'slithering'. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the teaching of phonics.
- Next, I focused on the effectiveness of the teaching of reading and writing in key stage 1. In previous years, writing was a weaker area by the end of Year 2. Again, in 2017, too few pupils were working at the higher standard.
- Together we observed the teaching of English in Year 1, and I observed guided reading sessions and listened to pupils read in Year 2. In Year 1, we agreed that when pupils were working independently, teachers' expectations of what the

pupils should achieve within a given timescale were not clear enough. While pupils who worked with teachers or teaching assistants focused well, those using tablet computers did not sustain their concentration. Pupils sometimes moved from one programme to another without fully completing their work. Adults did not oversee or monitor the progress of pupils copying words onto a whiteboard closely enough. As a result, some pupils were repeatedly writing words with letters in reverse order. For example, some pupils wrote 'said' as 'dias'. This slowed the progress of pupils in developing their reading and writing skills.

- In Year 2 guided reading, the teachers worked with small groups, checking very effectively on pupils' reading skills. Teachers asked pertinent questions, encouraging pupils to retell the story in their own words. Pupils made sensible predictions about what might happen later in the story. Pupils made excellent progress. While others read independently, I listened to pupils reading. It was apparent that pupils could use their phonic skills well to work out unfamiliar words. However, there was no method in place to record words that pupils did not understand. Improving pupils' reading and writing skills in key stage 1 is a priority for the leader of this key stage.
- Finally, I considered the breadth of the curriculum and to what extent it raises the aspirations of boys and girls. Although you have made sure that boys' progress and attainment is similar to that of girls, in English girls still do better.
- Leaders have developed a curriculum that is broad and balanced. Teachers develop religious education and personal, social and health education effectively within topic work. Assemblies, lessons and faith festivals enable pupils to learn about other cultures, tolerance and British values. A varied range of experiences, including out-of-school activities and trips, further enrich the curriculum and broaden pupils' experiences. The effectiveness of the curriculum leads to pupils aspiring to work as doctors, scientists, human rights lawyers and artists. Several pupils told me they 'wanted to make a difference to the world' when they are older.
- When I met with pupils they told me how much they enjoy their work because 'teachers make lessons fun'. Pupils talked animatedly as they recalled a range of topics, such as space, the Crimean War and natural disasters. In key stage 1, teachers plan activities that inspire pupils to write a diary entry, putting themselves back into the period when Florence Nightingale nursed soldiers. This results in pupils making good progress in English while exploring history and geography topics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- key stage 1 leaders develop their roles fully to improve further the quality of teaching and learning in English across the curriculum, so that a higher proportion of pupils attain a greater depth in reading and writing
- key stage 1 pupils working independently are given clear instructions about what teachers expect them to achieve, especially when using computers

- attendance continues to improve to help pupils to reach their full potential, particularly disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Naomi Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I observed teaching and learning across the school alongside the headteacher. I listened to a group of pupils read in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. Also I scrutinised a range of pupils' work. I held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, the chair of the governing body, the designated safeguarding leader and the deputy designated safeguarding leader. In addition, I took account of 29 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View and considered 20 free-text responses from parents. I spoke informally with parents at the school gates to seek their views and I also spoke with pupils. During the inspection, I reviewed a range of school documents. These included: the school's development plans and self-evaluation documents; minutes of the governing body meetings; safeguarding documentation and various records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.