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Miss Dani Worthington
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Worthington

Short inspection of Moorside Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 September 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 in your school since it was judged to be good in November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Moorside Community Primary School is a friendly and welcoming school where pupils are happy, safe and enjoy their learning. Teaching engages pupils well, meaning that they behave well and are keen to do well. Parents are positive about the school. They report that staff, including you and other leaders, are approachable and work very hard for their children. They also report that where concerns are raised, these are dealt with quickly and effectively.

At the last inspection, inspectors identified two areas for improvement. The first was to ensure that teaching activities challenged the most able pupils more and to make the pace of learning more appropriate to push pupils always to work hard. Following the previous inspection, outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching declined for a period of time. This was because these areas were not immediately worked on. However, since your appointment in January 2016, the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and progress have improved. Now there is consistently strong teaching in the school and some teaching is particularly strong. This means that most groups of pupils are challenged well, although the most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Teachers use various checks on learning to ensure that when pupils are ready to move on, they do so rapidly. Equally, where pupils need further support, teachers provide this in a timely manner.

The second area for improvement was to improve pupils' achievement in writing

and ensure that pupils were given regular opportunities to write at length and that they present their work with neat, clear handwriting. Again, following a period of weaker outcomes in writing, pupils' writing standards are now improving. This is clear in the standard of writing seen across the curriculum in pupils' work. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' writing and ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to practise and use correct English grammar, punctuation and spelling, which ensures that writing is now more accurate. Furthermore, thanks to the engaging curriculum in place, pupils regularly write on a variety of topics. Teachers give pupils useful feedback on writing, which pupils use well. Pupils are used to editing their own work and improving it. This has led to better outcomes in writing for different groups of pupils. In addition, the regular reinforcement of reading and writing across different subject areas helps pupils make good progress. This is not always the case for mathematics, however, and opportunities to bring these skills into other subjects are sometimes missed.

In recent years, pupils' outcomes have been disappointing. Following the appointment of a new governing body by the local authority and then your own appointment two years ago, there has been a much sharper evaluation of the school's provision and of the issues in teaching, leadership and pupils' behaviour for learning. In turn, expectations have heightened considerably, and training for teachers has improved. You, alongside your deputy headteacher, governors and the local authority, have maintained a strong focus on teaching quality and on the accuracy of assessment. This means that pupils' achievement over time is clearly understood and any underachievement is quickly identified. Support for pupils, as necessary, is then provided, ensuring that different groups of pupils are achieving well. As a result, 2017 pupil outcomes and work in pupils' books have shown clear improvement in terms of both attainment and progress across all classes.

This improvement has also been seen in the teaching of phonics. Following leaders' review of phonics teaching, there has been an increase in the proportion of Year 1 pupils passing the phonics screening check, as well as the proportion of Reception children reaching a good level of development in reading by the end of early years.

Since the last inspection, attendance has been below average and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent much higher than average. Again, since your appointment, systems for tracking pupils' attendance have sharpened considerably and attendance has increased. These improvements have secured pupils' well-being and welfare. Not only do pupils attend more frequently but they have a better chance of making good academic progress. Improved attendance also means that these pupils are safe and properly safeguarded. However, as you are fully aware, there is still more to do to ensure that harder-to-reach families are aware of the importance of their children attending school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Adults receive regular training so that they know how to keep children safe and understand their responsibilities if they have concerns about pupils' safety.

They understand the importance of reporting issues quickly while also reassuring the child that they have done the right thing. As with attendance records, the school has a very detailed record of any concerns regarding pupils' safety and welfare. These are kept securely, but are shared, where necessary, with external agencies to ensure that the child gets the best support and protection.

Pupils report that bullying is rare and that behaviour is good. They say that they always feel safe in school, and where they are concerned or worried, they know who to talk to. They feel confident that adults will deal with issues immediately. Parents also report that any bullying or concerns about behaviour are dealt with effectively. This means that such issues do not persist or become more serious. Records on bullying and behaviour in school reinforce that any issues are dealt with well and in a timely way.

The single central record is detailed and accurate and reflects that proper checks on all adults are carried out in depth, to ensure that all adults can be considered safe to work with children.

Inspection findings

- Pupils make good progress and the standards they reach are improving quickly, thanks to the strong support and training you have put in place to improve teaching recently. This is the case for different groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. It is also the case across reading, writing and mathematics and in different classes.
- Teaching is good. Teachers regularly check pupils' work and provide clear feedback which pupils understand and use well. They are well-practised in editing and improving their own work, especially in writing and mathematics, and this has helped outcomes to improve.
- Children in the early years receive good provision. Their needs are accurately assessed and their development is regularly observed. Leaders and other adults use information well to provide an engaging curriculum which works to overcome gaps in children's development. As a result, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is increasing rapidly, faster than is seen nationally, ensuring that they are well prepared for Year 1.
- In key stages 1 and 2, different groups of pupils continue to do well in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils also get regular opportunities to develop skills in other subjects, such as history, geography, science and French. However, at times, teachers do not make sure that learning is personalised for different groups of pupils. This can mean that the pace of learning and level of challenge is not appropriate for the most able pupils, in particular.
- Assessment systems are robust and accurate and have been a key focus within your leadership team to support better teaching which sharply focuses upon gaps in pupils' knowledge. Such a robust system means that leaders and teachers know where pupils are underachieving and can deal with this efficiently and

effectively. This work has supported precise intervention working to overcome underachievement quickly.

- In addition, your monitoring of teaching is rigorous and regular. You know your teachers' strengths and what their training needs are, which means that the quality of teaching continues to improve. Appraisal systems also link into the robust monitoring of teaching. Targets set challenge and support teachers to continue to improve and sharpen their practice. The system also ensures that leaders and staff know their responsibilities for ensuring that pupils reach their potential.
- Attendance has improved and the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent has reduced. This is testament to the rigorous checks made by leaders and other staff, to the very strong relationships the school has developed with families and pupils, and to the fact that pupils want to be in school because they are keen to do well. However, despite strong improvements in this area, further work is needed to ensure that even the hardest-to-reach families are supported and understand the importance of regular attendance for their children. You and your team recognise this need.
- Phonics is now well taught and has improved thanks to the new system to support pupils' rapid development of letters and the sounds they make from early years onwards. The school works effectively with pupils in key stage 2 who have not passed the phonics check to ensure that they secure their learning of phonics to support their reading and writing.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching and outcomes improve further by ensuring that activities across the curriculum meet the needs of different groups of pupils more closely, especially the needs of the most able, by ensuring that work is challenging pupils well
- mathematics skills are regularly reinforced across different subjects, in the way that reading and writing skills are currently practised across the broader curriculum
- the focus on attendance of pupils, including those who are regularly absent, continues so that the harder-to-reach families are well supported and attendance improves further.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona McNally
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited all classes in school to observe teaching and its impact on learning. I also looked at a wide range of pupils' books from all classes, across the various subject areas. I met with three members of the governing body and members of the senior and middle leadership teams, as well as yourself.

I looked at the school's information about safeguarding of pupils and examined records around behaviour and bullying, as well as attendance. I also looked at a range of other documents, including your self-evaluation document, the school's development plan and your monitoring information on teachers. I held discussions with two groups of pupils from key stages 1 and 2, which also included pupil leaders in school. I met with 10 parents in the playground as they brought their children to school, to gauge their views of the school, and considered the 19 responses to the Ofsted parental online questionnaire, Parent View.