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Ms Karen Wallace
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Dear Ms Wallace

Short inspection of Moreton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 30 November 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.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

Since you were appointed, you and governors have continued to ensure that school improvements focus on further raising pupils' achievement across the curriculum. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the leadership of the school, and the teachers. One parent commented that Moreton is, 'a very supportive school, very well run and my children love attending'. Parents I spoke with particularly praised the support you and your team provide for their children with additional needs. Parents who wrote to me, and those who responded to the Ofsted free-text questionnaire, also recognised this support. One parent stated: 'Moreton is inclusive, co-operative and goes that extra mile to make the children, and the parents, feel welcome.'

Pupils at Moreton are confident and enthusiastic learners. In all classes I visited, pupils engaged well with activities demonstrating good attitudes to learning. They were excited to show me their Christmas displays and share with me their favourite subjects. Breaktimes are energetic affairs and pupils told me they enjoyed playing outside.

You and your leaders work effectively with other school partnerships. Peer reviews have helped you share good practice and develop the skills of your new leaders.

Your work with other schools has also confirmed the accuracy of your assessment of pupils' work, particularly in writing and mathematics.

One of the most significant improvements you and leaders have made is towards improving the behaviour of pupils. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the rewards for good behaviour as part of the recently reviewed positive behaviour system. They value the 'golden time' they receive. Many were keen to tell me that they had reached 'gold' and would therefore be able to choose an exciting activity on Friday afternoon. You were able to provide evidence in your records of pupil incidents that demonstrate that behaviour has improved over time, with very few incidents of poor behaviour recorded. Pupils told me that there is sometimes silly behaviour from some individuals, but an adult will always deal with it effectively.

Published attainment information indicates that writing in key stages 1 and 2 has improved over time. Despite attainment being still slightly below national averages, there is evidence that writing for current pupils in the school is continuing to improve. Writing books show that pupils are taught a range of skills and write for many different purposes. On occasions, teachers could be clearer about what they want pupils to learn and you agree that in some lessons teachers could be more specific about the learning intention. However, when this is done well, pupils make good progress, as evidenced in published information for pupils in key stage 2. This shows progress and attainment data is above the national average for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2017.

Another recommendation in the previous inspection report was to improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that additional adults support pupils of all abilities effectively. You have fully reviewed the staffing structure, ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants are best placed to use their skills to good effect. You highly value your support staff and provide them with opportunities to develop their roles, for example by undertaking specific training to support the many different and often complex needs of the pupils in your school. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and support pupils in class to catch up, as well as providing one-to-one mentoring to support the most vulnerable pupils.

You and governors recognise that developing leadership capacity at all levels is essential to ensure that improvements continue. You have developed your own system for tracking and assessing pupils' progress, which is very detailed and effective. However, you agree that this responsibility needs to be shared more widely among the leadership team so that pupils who are capable of making more progress can be identified quicker. You are currently looking at implementing a system which can be shared more effectively among your senior and middle leaders. Your senior leaders have already begun to take responsibility for evaluating and demonstrating pupils' progress at whole-school level.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, have ensured that arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are

effectively maintained. All statutory checks on employees are undertaken. You have effective systems for staff to communicate concerns about pupils who may be at risk. Files for vulnerable pupils are detailed, with a chronology, so that incidents, actions and next steps can be easily identified.

Leaders ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are well supported. Learning mentors ensure that pupils who have social and emotional needs have the support they need to access the teaching and learning in class.

Pupils who I spoke with told me that bullying does not happen at the school and were able to speak to an adult in school if they were worried or had any concerns. They were able to talk about internet safety and knew how to protect themselves online.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was concerned with the teaching and learning of phonics. The reason for this was that in 2017 only 75% of pupils met the required standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. This indicated that there had been a dip in attainment since 2016.
- You were able to provide evidence that confirmed a high percentage of those pupils had additional needs, or were receiving extra support for speech and language, and therefore did not reach the expected standard. By the time pupils leave Year 2, the vast majority have caught up and meet the expected standards.
- You and your teachers work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils get the additional support they need. Pupils in key stage 1 who read to me could all use their phonics knowledge to read unfamiliar words and those who had speech and language difficulties read with confidence although they clearly struggled with some common sounds.
- The school's recently reviewed chosen approach to teaching reading and writing is being taught consistently across the school. This approach integrates spelling of new learned sounds into the pupils' reading and writing. In key stage 1, pupils are taught across year groups so that pupils with the same starting points are taught together. For example, in one group a child from Reception was working with Year 1 pupils. In this lesson, pupils were learning how to add a suffix to change the tense of a sentence.
- Pupils routinely consolidate their skills when they are using new sounds in their writing. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were analysing texts and were able to explain why an author had used the word 'scooped up' rather than 'picked up'. One pupil said, 'It sounds more interesting.'
- Pupils are engaged and keen to learn and share their learning. It is evident that pupils are making strong progress in lessons. The school's detailed progress information confirms that pupils make good progress from their different starting points. Outcomes in reading are particularly strong in key stage 1, with pupils exceeding national averages at both the expected and at higher standards in 2017.

- In my next line of enquiry, I wanted to look at the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Provision for these pupils is effective. Teachers and additional adults support pupils through small-group work and one-to-one support. Teaching assistants are trained in specific areas of need and work closely with specialist external agencies so that they can provide the additional support required.
- Close monitoring and reviewing of progress information means that as a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their different starting points.
- Progress of different pupil groups, particularly the most able, was an area for improvement in the previous inspection report. In addition, attendance for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities was below national averages in 2016, so these groups of pupils became my final key line of enquiry.
- You have reviewed the attendance policy and have continued to follow up pupil absences immediately. The introduction of a breakfast club has had a positive impact on pupils' attendance, particularly for the disadvantaged pupils. However, some pupils have complex medical needs which prevent them attending school regularly. The latest attendance information shows that attendance for most groups of pupils is improving.
- As already mentioned, pupils are taught across year groups in phonics, ensuring that the most able make progress from their starting points and the least able are supported to catch up. Pupils' workbooks show differing levels of support for the most and the least able pupils.
- Attainment has been improving year on year. In 2017, published pupil attainment information demonstrated that a greater proportion of pupils reached the higher standards of attainment in key stage 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. This was an improvement on 2016.
- The majority of pupils, including the most able, make good progress from their various starting points because of close tracking and monitoring. This enables small-group activities to be tailored to the different needs of pupils.
- An area for improvement in the previous inspection report was the need for teachers to provide next steps to pupils about how to improve their work. You acknowledge that this is still a priority so that more pupils, particularly the most able, know exactly what they need to do to make the progress of which they are capable.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the responsibility for analysing pupil progress information is shared more widely with middle leaders and teachers, so that pupils who are capable of making more progress are identified quickly

- teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn so that pupils know precisely what they need to do to make the progress of which they are capable.

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

Yours sincerely

Cindy Impey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders and governors.

A number of documents were reviewed, including the single central record of employment checks, the school's self-evaluation and pupils' assessment and progress information. I also looked at the school's improvement plan and minutes of the governing body meetings.

I spoke with a representative from the local authority, pupils and parents at the start of the day.

I visited all year groups and looked at examples of pupils' work.

I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and as they moved around the school and listened to pupils read.

I also took account of the 60 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 53 free-text comments from parents.