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Mr Andrew Martin
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Martin

Short inspection of Oswaldtwistle Moor End Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 December 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 April 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection and has ensured that the school continues to move forward strongly. Leaders, staff and governors share a clear ambition for the school to make a positive difference in the lives of all its pupils, and particularly to provide high-quality support for potentially vulnerable pupils and their families. Staff are proud to work at Moor End and speak very highly of the sense of teamwork and togetherness across the school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive, and virtually all would recommend the school to other parents. One typically positive comment from a parent was: 'I am so glad I made the decision to send my child to Moor End.'

Pupils are friendly, well mannered and provide a warm welcome to visitors to the school. In class they display positive attitudes to learning, listening well to both their teachers and classmates, and expressing their own ideas with increasing confidence. Pupils' conduct around school and on the playground is good, and older pupils happily support and encourage younger ones so that nobody is left out. Pupils have a good understanding of British values, including the concept of democracy and the importance of respecting people of different races and religions. They have a strong sense of fairness and equality, which one pupil explained meant 'We care for and respect everybody.'

The breadth and quality of the curriculum is a notable strength of the school. You have decided that all pupils across a key stage will study the same 'topic' at the same time, but at an age-appropriate level. Staff and pupils say that they like this approach because, as one pupil explained, 'We all get into things together.' Pupils' work shows that they develop subject-specific skills well, such as using maps or carrying out research in history or experiments in science. Teachers also ensure that they give pupils plenty of opportunities to practise and apply their skills in English and mathematics in other areas of the curriculum, for example by writing recounts or using measurements when following historical cooking recipes. The curriculum is further enhanced by a variety of trips designed to broaden pupils' experiences, such as visiting the seaside or zoo.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. One of these was to develop pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils now confidently use a wide range of punctuation in their written work, and older pupils in particular are becoming increasingly skilled in using different sentence structures to add interest to their writing. Yearly improvements in outcomes in the key stage 2 grammar, punctuation and spelling test further confirm an improving picture in this area. Similarly, you have successfully brought greater consistency to the work of teaching assistants, who now provide good-quality support for pupils of all abilities throughout the school.

There is, however, no sense of complacency. Leaders, including governors, know the school very well and are keen to ensure that it continues to move forward at a good pace. Consequently, leaders have highlighted further improvements to be made. While senior leadership is highly effective, staff acknowledge that there is potential for the role of subject leaders to be developed further. Similarly, the leader for the early years has put plans in motion to develop the teaching of phonics in Nursery so that children come into Reception class ready to move on quickly in developing their phonic skills and understanding.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has successfully established a culture of vigilance and safeguarding awareness throughout the school, and staff have a strong sense of shared responsibility for pupils' well-being. Staff and governors receive regular training to ensure that their knowledge of good practice in safeguarding is up to date. As a result, they fully understand the procedures to follow if they are worried about a pupil's welfare, and leaders ensure that such concerns are swiftly acted on.

Leaders also ensure that appropriate checks are made on staff, governors, volunteers and regular visitors to the school to make sure that they are suitable people to work with children, and that records are detailed and of a high quality.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and are confident that their teachers will look after them. They have a good understanding of important aspects of safety,

including road safety and safe use of the internet. They can also talk about different types of bullying, such as cyber bullying and racism, but say that bullying is very rare in their school. They are especially appreciative of the work of the learning mentor, whom they say helps to sort out any occasional friendship problems they may have and is always available to support them.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, the first of which looked closely at the progress that the most able pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2016 and 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards at the end of key stages 1 and 2 was very variable, and was particularly inconsistent in writing and mathematics. This had also been identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection.
- Information about pupils' achievement over time confirmed that improvements had been made following the last inspection. Leaders recognised though that the increased expectations of the updated curriculum had proved challenging for pupils at Moor End, so that recently fewer have reached the higher levels. Improvements in the teaching of writing have paid dividends, and written work produced by the most able pupils is of a high quality. Pupils have a good grasp of how sentence structure and punctuation can be used for effect, and the most able use language skilfully. This was exemplified by some Year 5 writing in the style of Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky*, which was of the highest standard.
- Leaders have also addressed the issue of too few pupils reaching the higher standards in mathematics. Teachers now give pupils plenty of chances to develop their reasoning skills by 'convincing' the teacher or a partner that their solution to a mathematical problem is correct. This is increasing pupils' mathematical articulacy. However, most-able pupils' work shows that teachers do not consistently provide them with sufficiently challenging activities, or that pupils are expected to complete lots of examples at a lower level before moving on to work that stretches them. As a result, their progress in mathematics is not accelerating as strongly as in writing.
- The second area of focus for the inspection was on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Recent assessment results had indicated that differences between their performance and that of other pupils nationally were not diminishing significantly.
- This is an area that leaders have put considerable thought and effort into. You realised that many of your pupils face a number of barriers to learning, and that overcoming these barriers was crucial in improving their academic performance. You have put practical strategies in place, such as ensuring that pupils have a calm and nurturing start to the day, including breakfast, so that they are ready to learn in class. The learning mentor also provides very effective pastoral support for vulnerable pupils. These actions are having the desired effect, and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has risen significantly to now be in line with other pupils in the school and nationally. You have used tracking information to identify specific groups of disadvantaged pupils who are most in need of extra help with their learning, and have put this support in place. The

work of current pupils shows that there is now typically no difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of their classmates.

- My final line of enquiry looked at why there have been fluctuations in the outcomes achieved by children in the early years from year to year. It is clear that there are differences between each cohort of children that are a major factor in these inconsistencies, including variability in the proportion of children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and the number who arrive at school without having attended the school's Nursery. Tracking confirms that children make good progress from their starting points on entry to the early years. However, the early years leader is keen to raise standards further, for example by strengthening provision in phonics in Nursery and by running workshops for parents so that they better understand how phonics is taught in the early years.
- A key strength of Moor End is the quality of the leadership that is provided by senior leaders, including a very capable and knowledgeable governing body. Leaders have been very successful in establishing a highly inclusive and nurturing ethos across the school. This is exemplified by the high-quality support provided in the school's resourced provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and by the strong sense of community throughout the school. Leaders have secured ongoing improvements in the quality of provision at the school, and capacity to improve further is strong.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers accelerate the progress of pupils who are most able in mathematics by providing them with suitably challenging work as soon as they are ready for it.

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

Yours sincerely

Neil Dixon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the leader responsible for the early years and the school's learning mentor. I also had meetings with five members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I also met a group of teaching and support staff and a group of pupils. I considered 33 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View,

including free-text comments, and 11 responses to the staff survey. I visited classes in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2, including the resource facility for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. I looked at examples of pupils' work jointly with yourself and the deputy headteacher. I also looked at a range of documentation covering different aspects of the school's work.