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Mrs Louise White
Moorside Infant School
Harrogate Road
Ripon
North Yorkshire
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Dear Mrs White

No formal designation inspection of Moorside Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 23 and 24 January 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned the school had not been brokered by an academy Trust. This is despite the school receiving an academy order following judgement that it required special measures when it was last inspected in March 2016.

Evidence

I scrutinised a range of documents including local authority monitoring records, the school's improvement plan and statement of actions. I checked the school's records of security checks on staff and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. I met with the executive headteacher and senior leaders of the school and four members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. Meetings were held with middle leaders, two representatives of the local authority and parents at the start of the school day. I also talked to pupils about their learning and heard a group of pupils read.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

leaders are taking effective action to remove the school from special measures

leaders may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Context

Moorside Infant School is smaller than the average-sized primary school and numbers have fallen since the time of the last inspection. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average as is the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. However, the school's context is changing and, in some year groups, the proportion of vulnerable pupils is higher than that found nationally.

Following the previous inspection, the substantive headteacher retired from her post with immediate effect. The deputy headteacher became acting headteacher and led the school until the end of the academic year 2015/16, when she too retired from her post. Most of the teaching and non-teaching staff have also left the school and all members of the governing body are different from those in position at the time of the last inspection. The local authority has secured the support of an executive headteacher and deputy headteacher, who are the substantive post holders of the neighbouring junior school.

Delays in academisation and significant staff turbulence have interrupted the school's journey to improvement. Stable governance and strong and purposeful senior leadership arrangements, since September 2016, are moving the school in the right direction. Leaders recognise that actions taken upon their appointment were too late to make a significant difference to pupils' outcomes in 2017, which were in the bottom 10% of all schools nationally. Assessment information for pupils currently in the school is demonstrating much stronger evidence of improvement in pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Significant staff training and robust arrangements to manage the performance of staff, alongside substantial senior and middle leadership support from the junior school staff, are improving the quality of teaching and learning effectively. This is ensuring that more pupils are making the progress expected of them. While this is heartening, leaders recognise there is still more to do to sustain the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders acknowledge that the expectations set out in the school's teaching and learning policy are not yet applied consistently.

Systems to check the progress of pupils are in place and assessment arrangements are now secure. This is enabling leaders to pinpoint the aspects of learning that need further consolidation and to identify those pupils who need additional support to catch up in their learning. Leaders use this information to identify priorities for improvement effectively. Action plans are detailed documents that are regularly evaluated. They would be improved by including detailed measures of success that are precisely linked to the improvements in pupils' outcomes that leaders desire.

Improving the progress of pupils, particularly the progress of boys, is a current priority of leaders. This is because their progress has not been good enough over time. More carefully planned support in lessons, along with improvements to the

curriculum, are beginning to accelerate pupils' progress, particularly boys'. Pupils are engaging in their learning and receiving many and varied opportunities to explore and investigate. The introduction of the forest school classroom is building pupils' confidence and enhancing pupils' increasingly widening knowledge, skills and understanding of the world around them. Leaders know that they need to build upon such work to ensure improved outcomes for pupils.

Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and lessons are usually calm and purposeful. Pupils are polite and friendly and they are keen to talk to visitors about their learning. Leaders have established a simple approach to behaviour management that is easily understood by pupils. A small minority of pupils demonstrate more challenging behaviours. Leaders manage these pupils effectively and sensitively. However, leaders also acknowledge that more can be done to establish good behaviours for learning sooner than is currently the case.

Middle leaders are skilled in their roles. They make regular checks on teaching and learning and provide timely feedback and support to staff. However, the speed with which they have been able to establish practice, consistent with the school's policy for teaching and learning, has been hampered by the many changes of staff that have taken place since the last inspection.

The early years leader was appointed following the last inspection and has worked tirelessly to improve children's outcomes and to ensure that both indoor and outdoor provision meets children's needs effectively. The local authority has provided considerable advice and support to secure accurate assessment and ensure all areas of learning are well planned for and well resourced. Consequently, leaders now have an accurate picture of children's achievement. They acknowledge that there is still more to do to ensure that adults in the Reception and Nursery class extend children's learning, especially that of boys and particularly in writing.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that staff are regularly trained in the most recent legislation. Staff know how to report any concerns they may have. Leaders have ensured that all systems are coordinated with those in the junior school.

Although the governing body is only relatively recently formed, governors use their skills to good effect. They are ambitious and determined to secure the future success of the school. They offer challenge and support to the executive headteacher as she manages difficult and complex circumstances.

External support

The local authority has brokered considerable support for the school, from local teaching alliances and, most crucially, the support of the executive headteacher, senior and middle leadership from the neighbouring junior school. This has

stabilised the school and provides clear and effective purpose and direction to staff and pupils.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that the school's statement of actions and development plans identify key milestones that are linked precisely to the rapid gains in pupils' outcomes desired by leaders.
- Ensure that adults in the early years maximise opportunities to extend children's learning, particularly children's early writing skills, and promote children's good learning behaviours effectively.
- Ensure consistent application of the school's teaching and learning policy to enable pupils' improving rates of progress to be sustained across all year groups.

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

Yours sincerely

Diane Buckle
Her Majesty's Inspector