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Mrs Amanda Donelan
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Dear Mrs Donelan

Short inspection of Moreton Christ Church CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 March 2018, 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, the leadership team and the governors are accurate in your evaluation of the school's performance. You took up your post as headteacher in September 2015 and you quickly identified areas that needed to be improved. For example, you quickly ensured that the school was teaching the national curriculum and introduced a new system of assessment.

Parents and carers hold the school in high regard. There was an overwhelmingly positive response to the Ofsted surveys. Parents value this school. A view typical of many was, 'The school really cares for the children, it knows who they are and tries hard to meet their needs.' This view was echoed by the many positive comments I received when I spoke to parents before school.

Pupils that I spoke to said that they enjoy coming to this school. They said that behaviour is good. Pupils said that mean things are sometimes said but teachers are quick to deal with this and to help them solve problems. Pupils said that they felt safe in the school. They spoke to me about the work they have done on other religions and cultures. Older pupils enthusiastically told me about their adventure residential earlier in the year. From observing pupils in lessons and at playtimes, I could see that they enjoy their learning. There is a real buzz around the school and relationships between adults and pupils are strong.

Governors are supportive of the school. They are knowledgeable. They support and

challenge you and the leaders in equal measure. Governors have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and the areas that need to be further improved. You have ensured that governors are skilled in data analysis, enabling them to ask the right questions. Governors are aware of their statutory responsibilities.

At the last inspection, inspectors asked school leaders to improve teaching. From talking to pupils, looking at pupils' books and observing lessons, we could see consistent practice across the school. Your careful monitoring has enabled you to identify and deal efficiently with ineffective teaching. Pupils now use a range of skills during lessons. Together we saw evidence of pupils working in pairs in a key stage 2 mathematics lesson, while using tablet technology to plan a trip to America. We saw evidence of collaborative working in many classes. For example, in Year 5, pupils worked in groups building bridges from straws to cross a gap. Teaching assistants are used effectively throughout the school to support groups of pupils and individuals where needed.

Inspectors also asked school leaders to improve standards in mathematics. Since then, outcomes for pupils leaving key stage 2 have improved, with attainment and progress now in line with the national average. You have recently introduced a new way to teach mathematics in the school. Initially this method has been implemented in key stage 1 and Year 3. When looking at a number of pupils' mathematics books from across the school, I saw clear evidence that teachers challenge pupils. An example of this was open-ended tasks that were matched closely to pupils' ability. Together we saw evidence of mathematics being taught across the curriculum. For example, in Year 3 we observed pupils weighing apples. They were then going to use this information to make predictions about rates of decay as part of their work on Ancient Egypt.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures are effective. Records of staff recruitment are detailed and of a high quality. All members of staff receive regular training in safeguarding and 'Prevent' awareness. Staff that I spoke to were well aware of the procedures for recording concerns. Several members of the leadership team and governors are trained in safer recruitment. You have close working relationships with a number of outside agencies, including children's social care. Pupils are taught about e-safety through the curriculum. Parents who responded to the Ofsted surveys felt that their children were safe at this school and were well cared for. Governors are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused on three lines of enquiry. The first of these was in relation to attendance. Historic data shows that the school attendance figure has remained below the national average for a number of years. From looking at your current data I could see that the overall school attendance figure continues to be just below the national average. However, rates of persistent absence are

well above the national average. They have increased by 5% from the same time last year. You are proactively tackling this issue. Pupils benefit from access to a breakfast club and 'Ready to learn time' before school to combat lateness. Your records show that a large number of pupils have refused to come to school when there is no good reason for them not to do so. Significant numbers of families continue to take their children out of school for holidays. You work closely with the school social-welfare officer. You have employed the services of a child-and-family mentor to work with vulnerable families. You are diligent in following up absences each day. You send termly letters home to parents informing them of attendance issues with a particular focus on the consequences of pupils missing lessons. You celebrate good attendance each week in assembly. However, despite all of your efforts, attendance continues to be an issue. Together we agreed that more needs to be done to reduce rates of persistent absence and increase the overall school attendance figure.

- My next line of enquiry focused on the quality of writing across the curriculum. Published data shows that pupils do not do as well in writing as they do in mathematics and reading. From looking at pupils' books and observing lessons, I could see that writing is of a consistent standard across a range of subjects. You said that you expect each pupil to write every day. Clear sequences of how writing is taught can be seen across the different key stages, with an emphasis on drafting, editing and building pupils' stamina to produce longer pieces of writing. The lead teacher for English monitors writing regularly. Recent monitoring showed that in the majority of year groups, teachers were applying the agreed strategies. You give teachers clear actions for improvement when expectations are not adhered to. You work closely with a number of local schools to moderate writing samples and share good practice. Current progress data for all year groups shows that significantly more pupils are now making good progress in writing, with increased numbers of pupils making better-than-expected progress.
- The final area that I focused on during this inspection related to the progress of pupils who are entitled to the pupil premium funding. With the governors, you monitor the effectiveness of spending carefully. You also monitor the impact of initiatives and interventions closely. Published data for the previous two years at the end of key stage 2 shows that pupils entitled to the pupil premium funding have done less well than their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. Through discussions with the local authority, I was able to ascertain that when these pupils were in key stage 1 there were significant failings in the key stage 1 assessment processes. As a result, the local authority placed the school into a category of concern. Consequently, the progress data for pupils has not been reliable.
- The progress of current pupils entitled to the pupil premium funding is now showing a much-improved picture in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Current data shows that pupils in key stage 1 are making better progress than those in key stage 2. Together we agreed that the progress of pupils in key stage 2 who are entitled to the pupil premium funding should increase to be in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to work hard to improve overall school attendance and decrease high rates of persistent absence
- pupils entitled to the pupil premium funding make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

John Donald
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

With you, we visited every class. I examined a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan, the school's self-evaluation document and records of safeguarding. I looked at the school's records for staff recruitment and training. Throughout the inspection, I held discussions with you, your leadership team and members of staff. I met with six members of the governing body including the vice-chair. I held a telephone call with a member of the local authority. I took into consideration 24 pupils' survey responses and 20 staff survey responses. I considered 67 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 40 comments sent in via free text. I considered two letters received from parents. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and pupils throughout the day. I observed pupils' behaviour throughout the school day. I reviewed the school's website.