

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



20 April 2018

Mrs Victoria Abbott
Headteacher
Moss Lane School
Moss Lane
Godalming
Surrey
GU7 1EF

Dear Mrs Abbott

Short inspection of Moss Lane School

Following my visit to the school on 28 February 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your determined leadership and strong vision for improvement is highly valued by staff, parents and governors. You are unrelenting in your ambition to secure the best possible outcomes for all pupils. As a result, pupils across the school achieve well.

You and the deputy headteacher work together well and use your complementary skills effectively. Your comprehensive and accurate understanding of the school's current performance means that you are alert to any decline in pupils' achievement and take effective action. The staff work successfully to give all pupils the opportunity to thrive in a positive and nurturing environment. One parent, whose views were typical of many, said: 'My daughter is excelling at this school and she loves to take part in the wide and varied extra-curricular activities that take place.'

Pupils work hard and want to do well. They have good attitudes to learning and are proud of their school. Pupils are well behaved, polite and kind to each other. They thoroughly enjoy learning in the calm, safe and welcoming atmosphere. One pupil echoed the views of many with the comment, 'I love learning in Moss Lane School.' Similarly, parents commented on how much their children enjoy learning and that they feel their children progress well. Comments such as: 'Moss Lane makes learning fun and applicable and I can see the progress my boy has made since being there' were shared by parents from across the age ranges.

At the last inspection, pupils' achievement in writing was identified as an area for

improvement. Current pupils achieve well in writing. Staff ensure that pupils use their phonics knowledge when spelling unfamiliar words. Teachers help pupils to structure their writing carefully so that its purpose is clear. Leaders were also asked to improve the quality of teaching. In response, you have given careful consideration to the year groups in which you deploy teachers so expertise can be easily shared between teachers. This has strengthened teachers' professional skills and subject knowledge. In addition, collaborative planning sessions for teachers ensure a high level of consistency in teaching across the school.

Published data from key stage 1 assessments in 2017 shows that pupils achieved well overall. A higher-than-average proportion achieved greater depth in reading, writing and in mathematics. Across the school teaching is generally good. However, there are times when work is not pitched at the right level to challenge current pupils' skills and understanding, particularly the most able pupils. This means that some pupils are not making the rapid progress which they are capable of. Staff sometimes ask pupils questions that do not require them to think deeply enough. Consequently, pupils are not challenged to develop their ideas. In addition, teachers do not probe pupils' answers to extend their thinking. You have sensibly included these weaker areas in your plans for improving pupils' achievement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school and the safety and welfare of pupils has a high profile. For example, leaders and teachers carry out thorough risk assessments, including for visits such as to Ufton Court. Staff with pastoral responsibilities know families well and ensure that all staff are vigilant in identifying any concerns. Leaders act swiftly when necessary and work effectively with external agencies to help safeguard pupils. Staff are kept up to date with information and support to understand and implement the most recent guidance.

Pupils I spoke to during the inspection confirmed that they feel safe and know how to keep safe, for example when using the internet. They said that staff do their best to make them feel happy at school. Pupils also said that there is very little bullying in the school and that the adults quickly sort out any difficulties. All staff, and almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agree that pupils are safe in school and well cared for. One parent wrote: 'This is a great school – welcoming, caring and really involved in the local community.'

Inspection findings

- Pupils make good progress and leave the school well prepared for their next steps. In the past, some lower-attaining pupils did not catch up quickly enough in reading and writing. During the inspection, I considered how leaders have strengthened assessment and teaching in English. Observations showed that teaching now focuses closely on reading strategies which enhance pupils' understanding of texts. Consequently, lower-ability pupils can interrogate texts

confidently, answering questions and making accurate inferences. These pupils read with self-assurance and enthusiasm, returning to what they have read to check that they have interpreted the meaning accurately.

- Lower-attaining pupils across the school make rapid progress in writing. This is confirmed by the school's current assessment information and work in pupils' books. Pupils write frequently and their writing is generally accurate. They have the opportunity to write for different purposes. As a result, pupils successfully master the features that are typical of a range of different forms of writing. For example, when writing stories pupils describe settings and characters well and use speech to build interest effectively. However, leaders recognise that some of the most able pupils complete writing tasks that are too easy. This is because expectations about what they can achieve are too low.
- Together, we looked at how disadvantaged pupils are supported to achieve higher skill levels. Leaders and governors use additional funding effectively to help disadvantaged pupils to learn well. Pupils benefit from additional one-to-one and small-group work that challenges them to think deeply about their learning in English and mathematics. Consequently, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils working at greater depth is increasing quickly. Pupil premium expenditure was evaluated for the previous year in much detail, enabling leaders to plan well for this academic year. A new strategy for current pupils is focused accurately on pupils' needs.
- I also looked at how well teaching enables girls to reach higher standards in mathematics. Workbooks show that a new, innovative and engaging strategy enables girls to apply their number skills effectively to real-life contexts. Carefully considered approaches enable all pupils, particularly girls, to acquire a good range of skills which they apply well in their learning. However, their progress is not accelerated because teachers and assistants' questioning does not challenge their thinking sufficiently. Both boys and girls are not required to develop their answers beyond their first responses.
- I examined leaders' and governors' strategies to improve disadvantaged pupils' attendance and reduce their persistent absence. The school's policy on non-attendance is firm and clear. This, combined with the appointment of a home-school link worker and rigorous follow-up of absence, means that pupils and parents are aware of the importance of regularly coming to school. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance has improved and is now good, and persistent absence has decreased significantly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- questions asked by adults develop pupils' thinking and challenge their ideas
- opportunities for pupils, especially the most able, to extend and challenge their knowledge, skills and understanding are provided more consistently.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Surrey. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Richard Blackmore
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We discussed the lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's evaluation of its performance, plans for improvement and current pupils' achievement. I had meetings with senior leaders, a group of your governors and the school's local authority improvement adviser. I gathered a range of evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. This included observations with you in all classes. I looked at a sample of pupils' current work. I spoke informally to a number of pupils about their learning and met more formally with a group of pupils to talk about their school experience. Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks. A discussion was held with you as the school's designated safeguarding lead. The views of 90 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, as well as the 90 responses parents made using the free-text facility. I also considered the 15 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.