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Miss A Heaton
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Dear Miss Heaton

Short inspection of St John's CofE Primary School Mosley Common

Following my visit to the school on 24 April 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 July 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 staff are committed to the positive changes brought about recently. This is leading to stronger outcomes for pupils. You and your deputy form an effective partnership. You have raised expectations and have challenged the underperformance of some members of staff. You also have a clear and accurate process for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. This gives leaders a better picture of pupils' achievement across the school. Regular pupils' progress meetings enable you and your leadership team to hold teachers to account and to make sure that pupils who need extra support receive it.

Governors understand their statutory responsibilities. They hold senior leaders to account in an effective manner. Governors' strong grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses ensures that they understand the next steps, including in the development of pupils' writing. This is because governors meet regularly with subject leaders, who keep the governing body well informed. Work to support young carers is a strength of the school. You are helping to remove barriers to their learning, improving pupils' future well-being and increasing their life chances. The local authority supports the school effectively. It enlists the support of a local headteacher who assists school leaders, helping to remedy identified weaknesses. The programme of improvement has been effective. As a result of stronger teaching, pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics has improved.

Parents and carers I spoke with during the inspection were very positive about the school. All parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said they would recommend the school. One comment summed up the positive feelings: 'St John's is a wonderfully inclusive school which allows children to thrive in the learning environment, to

achieve great things. The ethos of the school encourages children to believe in themselves [in] the same ways in which the staff do.' Behaviour is a strength of the school. All pupils are courteous and polite to visitors and eager to discuss their learning. Pupils told me they enjoy school and value the teachers. They stated that, 'Learning is fun, but challenging.'

Since the previous inspection, you have appointed new subject leaders across a variety of subjects. Leaders now have the opportunity to monitor their subjects and contribute to school improvement through the analysis of assessments to inform the school's next steps and reports to governors. You have achieved this by providing subject leaders with training and opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities to monitor teaching, learning and assessment. Staff development is improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers welcome the opportunities they receive to develop their skills, both as teachers and as leaders. A number of teachers are new to the school, but effective induction has ensured that they have made a positive start. You were also asked to raise standards in writing and mathematics. We agreed to look at this as part of the inspection.

During the inspection, we discussed the next steps required to enable the school to improve further. Standards in writing are improving. However, we agreed that the recent improvements in the way in which staff plan and teach lessons need to be continued and embedded and that the progress that middle-ability pupils make should be improved. We also agreed that the most able pupils could be challenged even further in mathematics, so that a greater proportion achieve the higher standards at the end of each key stage. Finally, you agreed that the number of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard should improve so that their performance is in line with that of other pupils nationally by the end of key stage 2.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You are passionate about safeguarding and make sure that systems are in place to keep pupils safe. There is a caring culture of vigilance, supported by thorough record-keeping. All staff have up-to-date training and know what to do if they are worried about a pupil. Pupils told me that they feel safe and parents agree. The curriculum develops pupils' awareness of safety. For example, pupils told me that there are regular opportunities in lessons to learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when online.

Governors have an effective overview of the culture of safeguarding in the school. Your family-support worker has developed a strong network of external support, which helps pupils and their families to receive the help they need in a timely manner. Parents said that the headteacher and staff are visible and available for discussion at the start and end of each school day.

Inspection findings

- We agreed several areas of enquiry for this inspection. The first of these was the effectiveness of actions taken by leaders to improve outcomes in writing. Leaders have addressed the dip in pupils' attainment and progress in writing at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. There is clear evidence from this inspection that your focus on improving the

quality of writing is having a positive impact on pupils' skills. Pupils told me they now enjoy writing. Year 6 pupils were particularly enthusiastic about writing linked to a class novel and creating their own ending with a twist. Teachers create opportunities for pupils to write at length in English lessons and practise their skills in subjects across the curriculum. These actions contribute to good and improving progress in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. However, you recognise that recent developments in the teaching of writing need to be continued and embedded, especially in upper key stage 2. You also recognise that the progress of middle-ability pupils should be accelerated to ensure that more pupils meet the expected and higher standards at the end of key stage 2.

- The next area we looked at was how well you are improving outcomes in mathematics. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics across the school. Pupils have access to a wide variety of resources that are effective in helping them to solve mathematical problems. As a result, they are developing much stronger reasoning and fluency skills. This is evident in their work across year groups and key stages. Pupils were able to draw on their knowledge of mathematics to solve unfamiliar problems during the inspection. This was apparent in Year 3, where pupils used the connection between division and multiplication to solve problems involving fractions. As a consequence of this consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics, pupils are making good progress and are acquiring the knowledge, understanding and skills they need. However, you have already identified that some of the most able could be challenged even further, so that a greater proportion of pupils achieve the higher standards at the end of each key stage.
- We also looked at how well you are improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Together with new leaders you are improving the use of additional funds. As a result of more effective assessment of pupils' different needs, teachers are able to target closely the additional support they provide for disadvantaged pupils. Teaching is now more clearly matched to pupils' needs. As a consequence, differences between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and that of others are now diminishing in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in pupils' books also confirms this to be the case. We agreed that, although the differences are lessening, there is still more to do so that the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics is in line with that of other pupils nationally by the end of key stage 2.
- Finally, I explored the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Your new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is effective. She works with staff and governors to monitor the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Staff expectations for these pupils are now high. There is a strong sense of teamwork among leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. Training based on pupils' needs means that teaching assistants provide very effective support for pupils across the school. You and your staff regularly hold review meetings about all your pupils, assessing the effectiveness of provision. The support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is closely matched to their needs so that they make swift progress in catching up with their peers. Work in pupils' books shows that, for the majority of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, progress is rapid from their starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- The progress of middle-ability pupils is accelerated to ensure that more pupils meet the expected and higher standards in writing at the end of key stage 2
- they embed the changes made to the teaching of writing and improve outcomes over time, especially at upper key stage 2, so that pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education
- they increase the percentage of pupils achieving the higher standards in mathematics at the end of each key stage
- they further embed the effective practice already introduced to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils so that the number of these pupils achieving the expected standard increases.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Hunter
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. I held meetings with you, senior staff and middle leaders to discuss improvements in their areas of responsibility. I looked at learning in pupils' books. I also spoke to the school improvement lead headteacher.

I reviewed documentation, which included your evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the school development plan. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day and considered 10 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also considered responses to the staff online questionnaire and pupils' online questionnaire.

I visited classes, together with you, to observe pupils' learning. I met with governors to discuss aspects of school leadership and management. I reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.