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31 December 2018

Mrs Sarah Sindrey  
Moorhill Primary School  
Pye Green Road  
Cannock  
Staffordshire  
WS11 5RN

Dear Mrs Sindrey

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Moorhill Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 13 December 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that standards rise rapidly for all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, by the end of key stage 2 by ensuring that:
  - all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are filled promptly, particularly in reading and writing in upper key stage 2
  - pupils are encouraged to read more challenging texts, particularly boys in upper key stage 2.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher, as well as the chair of the trust, the chair of the governing body and other governors, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

I visited lessons with you and the deputy headteacher, talked to pupils and looked at work in pupils' books. I spoke to parents and carers at the start of the day and viewed responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online parent questionnaire.

I reviewed documents including the single central record, reports of external reviews, governing body minutes, current assessment information and the school's own monitoring information. I talked to pupils at breaktime about how the school helps them to learn and develop independence. Leaders shared with me the most recent attendance information and we discussed how the school is working with parents to improve attendance.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection there have been a number of changes to staffing. Two teachers have left the school, one to take up a promoted post in another school. One teacher is currently on maternity leave. The chair of governors stepped down in July 2018. The school has one newly qualified teacher.

## **Main findings**

The school was last inspected in January 2018, when it was judged to require improvement. Leadership and management and early years were judged to be good. The school has not been judged to be good overall in any of its last three full inspections.

The areas for improvement from the last inspection are being tackled effectively by leaders.

Governance has been strengthened since the last inspection. A new chair of governors took up the role in September 2018. This is already beginning to show impact in the level of challenge for leaders in governing body meetings. Two new governors have joined the governing body, along with the chair of the trust, who is also the headteacher of another trust school. The recently established steering group focuses specifically on raising standards. This is proving to be a much more rigorous vehicle for school improvement. There is now a much sharper focus on improving academic outcomes.

The quality of teaching is improving. Teachers are benefiting from good-quality support and training. Subject leaders have been supported well to develop their

skills. In turn, they are beginning to support teachers more effectively. Most teachers now provide pupils with more opportunities to discuss their learning, particularly in mathematics. Teachers' questions now provide pupils with the opportunity to give extended answers, explaining their reasoning. In English, pupils now have more opportunities to apply their skills and explain what they understand from their reading. Pupils are starting to use increasingly sophisticated vocabulary in their explanations. As a result, they are growing in confidence and independence.

Work in pupils' books shows that they are developing their resilience as learners. The school has revised the way teachers give feedback to pupils. Pupils now check their own work against specific success criteria before asking the teacher to check it. They read each other's work and give feedback on how it could be improved. This approach is becoming well embedded. Pupils say that this helps them to understand what is expected of them for each piece of work and how they can achieve it. However, some pupils do not have a clear overview of their ongoing progress and what they need to do to improve their learning more generally.

Pupils say that they feel the school is improving because their work is getting more challenging. They are proud of the school. Many pupils enthusiastically take on roles of responsibility, for example as prefects. This helps to build their resilience and confidence. Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility to care for and guide younger pupils. They act as champions in the lower school at lunchtime to help supervise younger pupils. They say that they enjoy helping to sort out any issues when friends fall out. For some pupils, there is a need to develop their confidence further, especially in upper key stage 2, so that they are ready for the next stage of their education.

Attendance remains a challenge for the school. The proportion of pupils with low attendance was high last year and spiked again early in the autumn term. This was because parents took holidays in term time. The school has responded robustly to this. You are making full use of new local authority procedures to fine parents if their children are absent too often. You have tightened up morning procedures so that pupils come into school on time. You have established clear expectations with parents about attendance and the impact of missing valuable learning time. As a result, attendance is starting to improve to be more in line with the national average.

The school is making steady progress towards becoming a good school. More time is needed, however, for new initiatives to show an impact on end of key stage 2 outcomes. In 2018, attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2 were well below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Current assessment information and work in pupils' books show that a higher proportion of pupils are now on track to achieve the standard expected for their age in most subjects and most year groups. However, for some pupils, particularly in upper key stage 2, gaps in their knowledge and skills persist, particularly in reading and writing. Some teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Boys, in particular, are not actively encouraged to read books that are sufficiently challenging.

The school's development plan is comprehensive and accurately identifies the correct actions to bring about improvements. Staff and governors have been involved in putting this together so that there is a common understanding of the need for improvement and how this will be achieved. Subject and phase leaders are now more involved in monitoring progress against the plan for their areas of responsibility.

### **External support**

The local authority commissions regular reviews of the school. These reviews record the improvements that have been made so far. The local authority is invited to attend the school's steering group meetings, but so far have not attended.

The school is part of the Chase Cooperative Trust, with two other schools. Moorhill works closely with one of the other trust schools. Together with other local schools, they moderate teachers' assessments and share training opportunities. This is a beneficial partnership. Governors have started to explore arrangements with other schools and trusts that may provide a more robust structure for the school going forwards.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Spilsbury  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**