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Mrs Kim Lonnergan
Interim Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Lonnergan

Short inspection of Moldgreen Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 2019, 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 December 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

The previous inspection asked you to improve teaching and increase rates of progress, especially in mathematics. It also asked you to increase further the impact of leaders and managers to raise pupils' achievement.

Since the last inspection, there have been considerable changes in senior leadership. In recent years the rates of progress pupils were making declined. Assessment systems were not strong and did not ensure that pupils' attainment was equal to or better than that of pupils nationally. Targets that were set for pupils were too low. Weaknesses in governance meant that these shortcomings went unchallenged.

You began supporting the school in the Summer term 2018 as part of a support programme brokered by the local authority. You then became interim headteacher in December 2018. You quickly began work to improve the skills of middle leaders to make sure that they were leading their subjects strategically. You also made sure that the school development plan was very clear in stating what needed to be done to raise attainment. You have forged good relationships with Westmoor Primary School, Dewsbury. This has helped teachers to gain additional expertise and has supported middle leaders well. During this time, the local authority improved the

skills of the governing body through training and recruiting new members.

I found that your self-evaluation is accurate and that all staff are focused on the clear priorities for improvement. Some things you have put in place are starting to have a positive impact but much still remains to be done. Pupils' writing at the end of key stage 1 and 2 is impressive. In Year 2, pupils write legibly, using an increasing range of sentence types and punctuation. By Year 6, pupils have acquired a range of vocabulary to make their writing rich and interesting. However, pupils' grasp of phonics in key stage 1 remains a weakness. I could see in the mathematics lessons we visited jointly, that teachers are starting to act on the advice and the training provided by the interim mathematics leaders. However, this is not yet having a strong enough impact on pupils' progress.

I found pupils to be delightful. They behave very well, both during lessons and at playtime. They are polite and courteous, eager to help each other in lessons and apply themselves diligently to their work. The Year 6 pupils I met described the school as 'a happy place' and said that 'teachers really care'. They had a good understanding of the potential dangers of drugs and alcohol but said they would benefit from better advice and guidance on sex and relationships. Moreover, pupils had a limited understanding of living in a modern democratic Britain.

Strong governance is now in place as a result of the high-quality support provided by the local authority. Governors keep a close eye on the development plan priorities, challenging and supporting leaders in equal measure. They now have a far better understanding of national benchmarks for progress and attainment. Consequently, they have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and further areas for improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and high quality. The training you have given to staff is comprehensive and up to date. You have a strong culture of safeguarding in the school whereby all staff are well aware of what they should do if they have any concerns. You have thorough procedures in place for the vetting and checking of new members of staff.

You have eight designated safeguarding leaders in school. The high-quality communication between these leaders means that they are able to share expertise. This means that any concerns are quickly discussed, dealt with and, if necessary, referred to outside agencies.

The pupils I spoke to understood how to use the internet safely. They were particularly keen to tell me about how social media, when used safely, has supported their work in school. Pupils told me that bullying is a rarity. This is verified in your records showing you have very few instances of bullying. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) expressed no concerns about bullying or behaviour. Visitors to assemblies and work in lessons provide

pupils with high-quality advice about water and road safety.

Inspection findings

- First, I was curious to find out why pupils' progress over time has been low in writing and mathematics. The actions you have taken to improve writing have been successful but there remains a dip in pupils' progress in phonics when they leave the early years. You have provided training to staff on teaching phonics, but this has yet to have a positive impact. In mathematics, teachers are now aware of the importance of teaching mathematical reasoning and problem-solving. However, the work pupils receive is often too easy and so does not challenge them sufficiently.
- Second, I looked at the quality of leadership. I found that you have successfully stabilised the school and are making positive changes to drive up attainment and pupils' progress. The local authority has supported you well by providing external reviews and training for governors. You have galvanised the enthusiasm of middle leaders and supported them well to improve their skills. However, it is still early days and much still remains to be done to ensure that their work is having a positive impact on standards, particularly in mathematics.
- Finally, I was keen to find out whether children acquire good basic reading, writing and mathematics skills in the early years. I found that literacy was a particular strength in the early years. Phonics is taught well and before long children are reading and writing simple sentences while also having a lot of fun. Indoors and outdoors, children play games to help them count and do simple calculations. A strong assessment system means that the next steps in children's learning are clear.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the skills of middle leaders continue to improve so that their work has a strong impact on improving pupils' progress
- the quality of phonics teaching improves in key stage 1 so that a larger proportion of pupils reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check
- pupils make better progress in mathematics across the school by ensuring that work is sufficiently challenging
- pupils have a better understanding of key British values and of sex and relationships by the end of Year 6.

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

Yours sincerely

Robert Jones
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, several staff, the chair of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority. I spoke to six pupils from Year 6 over lunchtime. While in classrooms I observed teaching, spoke to pupils and looked through the work in their books. I spoke to several parents as they were dropping off their children in the morning.

I considered a range of documentation, including the 28 responses to Parent View, the 26 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire, the school development plan, governance documents, the summary of self-evaluation, records of quality assurance completed by your middle leaders and safeguarding documents.