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Mrs Sara Moreton  
Headteacher  
Withnell Fold Primary School  
Withnell Fold  
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Chorley  
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Dear Mrs Moreton

### **Short inspection of Withnell Fold Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 May 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 January 2015

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have ensured that the school continues to be a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. You and the staff celebrate pupils' learning well in the many colourful displays of their work around the school. You make sure that pupils have every opportunity to make the most of the small outdoor space available to them.

Since the previous inspection, the proportion of children who leave the early years with a good level of development has remained in line with other children nationally. Small numbers of pupils in each year group make comparisons of assessment data unreliable; however, it is clear to see that outcomes for pupils in key stage 1 continue to improve each year. For the previous two years, pupils have achieved well in the Year 1 national phonics screening check. Pupils typically leave Year 6 having made as much progress as other pupils nationally. Attendance remains much higher than the national average.

Your evaluation of the school's effectiveness is detailed and honest. You have identified many of the school's strengths and where further improvements are needed. The school development plan builds upon actions that have been accurately identified.

Parents and carers are supportive of the school. Those with whom I spoke and those who responded to the Ofsted surveys, were happy that their children were safe and

well looked after while in school. They appreciate the efforts that staff go to in providing support for their children. Parents also praised the school for how well pupils are prepared for their move to high school.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They conduct themselves well in lessons and while moving around school. Pupils said that they enjoyed school. Those with whom I spoke were keen to state that bullying and name-calling were very rare. They stated that their teachers were fair. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe while using the internet. They know not to share personal information and that they need to speak to a trusted adult if they encounter something that worries them while online.

Governors know the school well. They are aware of the strengths and where further improvements are needed. Governors monitor well the impact of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. To help them better understand and develop their roles the governors visit the school regularly and work closely with class teachers. Their visits are closely aligned to the school development priorities. They challenge each other well and hold senior leaders to account. However, governors have not ensured that the school's website is kept up to date. Prior to the inspection, several aspects of the school's website were available in school but not published in line with Department for Education requirements.

At the time of the previous inspection, you were asked to ensure that teachers set higher expectations of what pupils could achieve by challenging them to make the best possible progress. Since the previous inspection, all teachers are new to their roles. You have created the role of deputy headteacher. In this role, the newly appointed deputy headteacher has worked with you to further develop the roles of teachers as subject leaders. Together as a staff, you now carefully check on the quality of teaching and the work in pupils' books to ensure that expectations are high, and pupils are sufficiently challenged. From looking at assessment information, samples of pupils' books and observing teaching, learning and assessment, I could see that pupils are challenged well across the curriculum. In English and mathematics, work is appropriate to the needs of pupils. Across the wider curriculum, teachers challenge pupils well. In geography, teachers ensure that pupils in mixed-age classes have work which tests their mapping skills with increasing levels of complexity. Work in science is well planned to develop the application of pupils' mathematical skills.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Together with the deputy headteacher, who is the designated safeguarding lead, you have ensured that safeguarding is given the highest priority. You have ensured that staff have received recent training in basic awareness of safeguarding. Staff have also received training in the 'Prevent' duty to enable them to spot signs of potential radicalisation. You and two members of the governing body are trained in safer recruitment. You have also received enhanced training in the 'Prevent' duty and awareness of female genital mutilation. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

You engage purposefully with children's social care when needed, ensuring that families receive appropriate support from the relevant agencies. You keep pupils and staff informed about staying safe through engagement with several national charities who visit school regularly. You work in partnership successfully with the local police, ensuring that the school fulfils its obligations through the 'Operation Encompass' initiative to safeguard children who may have witnessed abuse or violence in their homes.

## **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, I focused on three lines of enquiry. The first related to the teaching of reading in key stage 1. You have carefully considered how the teaching of phonics links to the teaching of reading, because children arrive in the Reception Year from various feeder nurseries, each with vastly different reading experiences. The effective teaching of phonics has seen pupils' outcomes continue to improve. Pupils are encouraged to read often. Pupils have a keen awareness of different types of books. Those whom I heard read had books which were matched well to their ability, providing a good level of challenge. Leaders monitor the progress of pupils carefully, ensuring that this level of challenge and support is consistent as they move through school. As a result of the care and attention to detail given to the teaching of phonics and reading, pupils' outcomes continue to improve.
- The second area I looked at during the inspection related to how well pupils apply their writing skills across the curriculum. Since the previous inspection, you have worked closely with the local authority to improve this aspect of the school's work. You have been hampered in your efforts by a change of teachers in all year groups. Your agreed approach to the teaching of writing is consistently applied across each year group. Pupils have opportunities to write across a range of genres and write creatively in subjects other than English. For example, in history pupils complete interesting pieces of writing about famous explorers, and in science they write about planting seeds and growing sunflowers. Application of a consistent handwriting style is developing across most year groups and the application of punctuation and grammatical features is typically of a high standard. Despite these many positive features, the most able pupils are sometimes not provided with enough opportunities to develop their longer pieces of writing across the curriculum. Pupils' assessment information indicates that fewer pupils reach the higher standards in writing than do so in reading and mathematics.
- The final area I looked at during the inspection related to how well leaders promote positive behaviour and pupils' understanding of equality, because this information was not on the school website.
- Positive behaviour is promoted well across the school. Pupils behave well in lessons and incidents of poor behaviour are rare. You keep a careful log of all incidents of behaviour and records show a decreasing number of incidents over time. A consistent approach to the application of the behaviour policy is evident in each class, and pupils with whom I spoke were clear in their views that behaviour was good. However, a significant minority of pupils who completed the Ofsted

pupils' survey reported that behaviour was only sometimes good in lessons. Although leaders have formulated a succinct behaviour policy, they have not communicated this well to pupils. As a result, there are a number of pupils who continue to misinterpret what is defined as acceptable behaviour for learning in class.

- Pupils have a well-rounded understanding of equality. They link their understanding very closely to the values they learn about in their collective acts of worship and religious education. They are respectful of different religions. They have benefited from visiting different places of worship. They learn about physical similarities and differences in people. Pupils know about same-sex marriage. They know about acceptance and are knowledgeable in their understanding of British values. Many pupils are sensitive to the needs of others, and they have a developing understanding of how others are affected by disabilities. This is evident in the significant number of pupils who choose to take part in the weekly sign language club.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to provide pupils, particularly the most able, with further opportunities to develop their writing across the broader curriculum
- they continue to communicate their expectations of behaviour to pupils, so that they have a clearer understanding of how the school expects them to behave
- they keep the website up to date in line with Department for Education statutory requirements.

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

Yours sincerely

John Donald  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection I met with you and the deputy headteacher. I met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. I met with two representatives of the local authority. Together, we visited classes in key stages 1 and 2. I spoke with pupils about their learning and viewed samples of their work.

I scrutinised the school's single central record and documentation in relation to safeguarding. I examined the school development plan and the school self-evaluation.

I spoke with parents before school. I considered the 21 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire and the 16 free text responses. I also considered the seven responses to the staff survey and the 60 responses to the pupils' survey.