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29 April 2016

Mrs Louise Anderton  
Headteacher  
Morland Area CofE Primary School  
Morland  
Penrith  
Cumbria  
CA10 3AT

Dear Mrs Anderton

### **Short inspection of Morland Area Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 April 2016, 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 March 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You provide highly effective leadership and clear direction to achieve your vision for pupils to 'become highly motivated life-long learners'. The school's core values of 'honesty, togetherness, compassion, reverence and wisdom' are supported by everyone in school and by parents. Your honest and accurate self-evaluation and resulting actions ensure that the school continues to improve. Staff work together enthusiastically, to provide a nurturing and exciting learning environment. Pupils are respectful and caring towards each other. They grow in confidence, take responsibility for their behaviour and show great pride in their many achievements. As one pupil said, 'There's no better feeling than knowing you have achieved your goal'.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed exceptionally well. Pupils display excellent behaviour, are highly motivated and sustain concentration when faced with challenging tasks. They are provided with stimulating learning and play experiences, which take account of their interests and build on their existing knowledge and skills successfully. This was seen, for example when older pupils played together with model farm machinery during breaktime; they used technical language and cooperated together to make sure their 'farm' operated efficiently.

You have improved the school since the last inspection. Effective liaison with the privately run Nursery provision on-site ensures that children get off to a good start in the early years. Provision has been enriched to provide children with a range of purposeful experiences across all areas of learning. Their language, literacy and mathematical skills are developed particularly well. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception class has risen and is now well above average. From these firm foundations, pupils continue to develop their knowledge and skills successfully in key stage 1 and key stage 2.

The vast majority of pupils who are currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are working at or above the standards that are expected for their age and have made good progress from their starting points. The most-able pupils are provided with challenging work that helps them to achieve high standards. Those who need extra help are supported effectively so they, too, make good progress. Your new marking policy is being applied consistently. Teachers mark pupils work in detail; however, marking is still variable in the impact it has on pupils' learning. We agreed that further review of your policy would be beneficial at this point, to ensure the most effective practice in school is shared between staff.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. All of those who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, say their children are happy and feel safe and would recommend the school to others. They are confident in the leadership and teaching at the school, stating for example, 'children learn in a positive supportive environment' with 'dedicated and expert staff' under 'excellent leadership'.

There is good capacity within the school to sustain further improvement. Your ambitious vision for the school is reinforced by governors and leaders at all levels. Governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for further improvement and provide insightful challenge and support to school leaders. They are well informed about broader local and national issues. They use additional funding wisely to enhance pupils' participation in sports and ensure those who are disadvantaged make just as good progress as others in school. Your successful partnership working with other schools through the Eden Rural Alliance adds capacity by enabling staff to share best practice and benefit from joint training.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The thorough procedures to safeguard pupils and the excellent care, guidance and support identified at the last inspection have been sustained. All safeguarding arrangements have been reviewed to meet current statutory requirements and changes in local provision, and are fit for purpose. Staff and governors have undertaken training relevant to their role, including in the 'Prevent' duty. They have a good understanding of the risks pupils can face, for example from extremist views and on social media. Pupils who are vulnerable are extremely well provided for.

Pupils feel extremely safe and develop effective personal skills within a nurturing environment. They make an excellent contribution to the school by taking responsibility for their own behaviour and showing care and consideration towards

each other. At breaktimes, older pupils look after the younger ones, including those from the Nursery provision, making sure they are safe and happy. Pupils' knowledge of how to keep safe outside of school and on the internet is developed well through several subjects and through talks by safety experts who are invited to the school. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and feel that it does not happen in school. Pupils' and parents' positive views are reflected in the good attendance by all groups of pupils and the extreme rarity of incidents that need to be logged and followed up.

## **Inspection findings**

- You are, rightly, held in high regard by staff, governors, parents and pupils. 'The school is very fortunate to have such a dedicated and calm headteacher who is very ably supported by our very experienced chair of governors' is a comment that typifies the views of staff and reflects inspection findings. You are ably supported by senior and middle leaders.
- Almost all staff have a leadership role and they fulfil their responsibilities with enthusiasm. They support each other effectively, to make sure teaching meets pupils' needs and secures their good progress in all subjects.
- Staff morale is high. Staff who responded to the survey were extremely positive about all aspects of the school. Comments such as, 'I'm proud to be part of the Team Morland family' and 'I enjoy coming to work in such a friendly atmosphere' are typical.
- Staff and governors have an accurate view of the school's performance and a clear understanding of its goals. However, the clarity of thought is not fully reflected in your school improvement plans, as priorities and measures of success are not as sharply defined in the plans as they are in practice.
- You have identified that pupils' attainment in mathematics and grammar, spelling and punctuation lags behind their high attainment in reading and writing. You have taken effective action to resolve this, with the introduction of new resources, a more systematic approach to teaching and the provision of workshops for parents. These actions have already improved pupils' use of grammar and calculation skills. However, you are aware that there is room for further improvement, particularly in developing pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics and improving their spelling.
- Teachers' performance is managed effectively. Their professional development is planned carefully to support school priorities and enhance their skills. The school's partnership working through the Eden Rural Alliance enhances provision for pupils and enables teachers to share ideas and best practice between schools.
- Pupils are provided with an interesting curriculum that stimulates their curiosity and enriches their learning. For example, the purchase and rearing of a calf enabled pupils to learn many new skills. Their learning is enhanced further through the many after-school clubs and trips out. Teaching assistants also make a valued and good contribution to pupils' learning during lessons and in small groups.
- Pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills are developed effectively and applied successfully in several subjects and exciting projects. Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught systematically, giving pupils a good

grounding in early reading skills. Pupils read with confidence and expression.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills are developed exceptionally well. Pupils are encouraged to debate issues and articulate their views with maturity and consideration. They learn about and show respect for other faiths and cultures.
- A high proportion of pupils have joined the school in key stage 2 and both the pupils and their parents are full of praise for the way in which they have been welcomed and supported. Many reported that the move had been 'life changing'.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvement planning clearly indicates your main priorities and the measures that will be used to check their success
- pupils are able to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics and learn a range of spelling strategies
- your feedback policy has the intended impact on pupils' learning and the best practice in school is used to inform further developments.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Carlisle and the director of children's services for Cumbria. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jean Olsson-Law  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met with you, a senior leader, and eight members of the governing body including the chair. I spoke with the school's local authority adviser by telephone. I visited all classrooms to observe learning and look at pupils' work. I spoke with pupils during lessons, and in two meetings. I looked at your assessment information, self-evaluation, and action planning and safeguarding procedures. I spoke with several parents at the start of the day and took account of 17 responses to 'Parent View', the online questionnaire for parents. I also took account of nine staff and 16 pupils' questionnaires.