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Mrs Anne Louise Hodgetts  
Head of School  
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Dear Mrs Hodgetts

### **Short inspection of Moorcroft Wood Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 October 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 February 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

In October 2017, you became the acting head of school, due to the previous headteacher becoming the acting executive headteacher of your school and another, at the request of the local authority. This led to a change of some leadership responsibilities. You have supported your leadership team effectively through these changes by providing appropriate professional development. There was a significant turnover of teachers in July 2018, due to maternity leave, retirement or working abroad. During this time, there has also been a new chair of governors.

All leaders, including governors, share the passion that you and the executive headteacher have for developing the 'whole child'. Your values of 'nurture, feed, grow, succeed' permeate through the school in the way that pupils are given opportunities to bloom as individuals.

Pupils value their participation in the wide range of trips on offer. Residential visits in Years 4 and 6, visits to the gurdwara, Stonehenge, London, and a whole-school trip to Llandudno, demonstrate how passionate you are that pupils' experiences are enhanced throughout their time at school. Numerous clubs also offer chances for participation in music and sport. Friday 'enrichment' afternoons enable a wide range of activities, including a scout group, to take place. A menagerie of animals,

including rabbits, guinea pigs and hens, are looked after by Year 5 pupils. This gives them a real opportunity to develop their skills of responsibility and reliability. Enrichment work is a real strength of the school.

There are many further opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities across the school, including head boy and girl, an active school council and play buddies. Pupils were proud to explain that the school council has raised funds for a 'twinned toilet' in Africa, the Nasio Trust to build an orphanage, and Children in Need. Such activities help pupils gain an understanding of cultures different from their own and improve the life chances of others.

Pupils' behaviour is supported through clear and consistent expectations from leaders and all staff. As a result, pupils are calm and well behaved around the school, in lessons and during lunchtime. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very strong, and nearly all pupils are fully attentive and focused on their work in class.

Pupils are considerate and helpful to each other, as shown by the playground buddies, where older pupils resolve concerns between their younger peers at lunchtime. One pupil commented, 'We treat each other how we want to be treated.' Pupils say there is no bullying. They are confident that strong and appropriate action would be taken if it were to occur. When discussing the importance of British values, pupils knew that these values had been taught but were not clear how they were part of everyday life in school.

Leaders and staff model how to build successful relationships through the way they interact with pupils. All leaders were seen at different times intervening carefully to help move pupils' learning on. For example, one pupil was encouraged to change their pencil grip and another to re-read a passage of text. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong. There is a culture of mutual respect between adults and pupils.

All pupils spoken to would recommend the school to a friend. All parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and those spoken to at the start of the school day, were complimentary about the school. One parent spoke for many when they said: 'I could not think of a better school to send my children to. Always going above and beyond for our children. Amazing.'

You have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You have ensured that mathematical skills are taught and developed effectively through other subjects. This has led to strong outcomes in mathematics at the end of key stage 2. You have introduced lessons and opportunities that give pupils a wide range of life experiences. These inspire pupils to write for a purpose. Middle leaders have completed leadership courses to improve their monitoring and evaluation skills. Leaders ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are fair and accurate.

Children in Reception make strong progress from their different starting points. The proportion of Year 1 pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics

screening check has improved and is now consistently above the national average. The majority of pupils in all year groups make good progress and work at the standard expected for their age in reading and mathematics. However, leaders rightly acknowledge that writing outcomes are not as good as they should be across the school. Too few pupils attain the higher standards in writing. This is because work is not challenging enough for the most able pupils and there is too much variability in the way in which writing is taught.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders ensure that children are kept safe at all times. Child protection and 'Prevent' duty training logs show that appropriate staff training has been completed. As a result, staff have the necessary skills and guidance to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. Safeguarding records are kept securely. They show that leaders are diligent in following up concerns, challenging other agencies when necessary. There are detailed risk assessments that cover the wide range of activities offered. For example, the forest school is thoroughly risk assessed and plans for its use are reviewed regularly.

Leaders ensure that all required recruitment and staff vetting checks are undertaken. A governor monitors these checks to ensure compliance with current statutory requirements.

Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe and say that there is always an adult they can go to if they feel sad, worried or have a concern. Pupils know the correct age restrictions relating to social media, but a number admitted that they use it at home despite being under the legal age to do so.

### **Inspection findings**

- Provisional outcomes for the end of key stage 2 in 2018 show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics is above the national average. Mathematics continues to be a strength of the school, with pupils making strong progress across key stage 2.
- Current pupils make good progress across the school in reading and mathematics. This is due to leaders embedding a clear approach to teaching and the effective use of assessment information to inform pupils' next steps in learning. Teachers employ consistent methods that ensure appropriate content is well taught, leading to good outcomes in learning. All teachers, including those new to the school, can confidently explain how lessons are structured in reading and mathematics and how they can use a variety of resources to cater for the different needs of the pupils.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not as strong as it is in reading and mathematics. You have rightly prioritised the need to develop a more consistent approach to the teaching of writing. During the inspection, however, we agreed that there was still too much variability between classes. Differences exist in how writing skills are taught and how pupils access and use new vocabulary to extend their

writing. This leads to discrepancies in the quality of pupils' work.

- You and your leadership team have ensured that pupils benefit from a breadth of experiences that they can then use to develop their ideas for writing. For example, Reception class children were inspired to write by the recent royal wedding. Leaders also ensure that rich texts are embedded within the curriculum to enhance the pupils' knowledge of language. A review of writing books shows that these approaches are helping pupils develop their ideas of what to write. However, pupils do not write consistently and regularly across a range of subjects to embed these skills.
- Despite there being changes in leadership roles and a number of teachers new to the school, leaders' self-evaluation is accurate, and you know your school well. You evaluate that the quality of teaching is good across the school and inspection evidence confirms this to be the case.
- Too few pupils currently achieve at the higher standards. Your school improvement plan rightly focuses on improving the progress of the most able pupils across all year groups so that they can attain the higher standards of which they are capable. However, during the inspection, we saw examples of some pupils not being sufficiently challenged. This was because current work was easier than the tasks they had successfully completed in previous lessons. Some books also demonstrate that some most-able pupils are not moved on to more challenging work quickly enough.
- Governors have a wide range of business and educational experience and use this knowledge to ask pertinent questions of school leaders, as shown by examples in minutes of meetings. Where required, governors follow up these questions with the creation of focus groups that involve leaders and governors. As a result, governors have a good understanding of the current strengths and development needs of the school. Leaders and governors have identified that the new initiative of a 'governor week' will give governors more chance to visit the school and enable them to hear directly from pupils.
- One area we discussed further was the standards achieved at the end of Reception. Many children start early years with skills and knowledge that are below those which are typical for their age. However, as a result of good teaching, they make good progress in all areas of learning. You have identified the sharing of good practice across early years as key to further improvement and have taken steps to facilitate this approach.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils reach higher standards across the school by being moved on to more challenging work when ready and ensuring that new tasks take account of previous learning
- the school's approach to the teaching of writing is applied consistently, wider vocabulary is promoted and assessment information is used to close gaps in learning to improve outcomes

- the curriculum consistently promotes fundamental British values so that pupils' understanding is further enhanced.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Cadwallader  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the executive headteacher, senior and middle leaders and teaching staff. I also met with three governors and a representative from the local authority. I undertook a walk around the school with you, the executive headteacher and an assistant headteacher. Together with a member of the senior leadership team, I visited all classrooms, spoke to some pupils and looked at some pupils' work.

I took account of the 22 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 21 free-text responses. I also analysed the views expressed by 23 staff through Ofsted's questionnaire about the school and its leadership. I spoke formally to a group of pupils and informally to individual pupils throughout the day. I also spoke to nine parents as they arrived at school.

I reviewed a number of documents, including pupils' progress information; the school's own evaluation of its performance; improvement plans; governor minutes; records of checks on the quality of teaching and learning; and several school policy documents. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school and I asked a range of staff about the training that they receive to help keep pupils safe. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures and checks on staff employed in the school. I checked the school's website and discussed my findings with leaders.