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Mrs Amanda Denney  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Denney

### **Short inspection of Moorlands Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 January 2019 with Amraz Ali, Ofsted Inspector, 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.

Since your appointment, following the school's last inspection, you have worked tirelessly to establish a new senior leadership team to support you in your efforts to improve pupils' outcomes further. You have appointed wisely, and collectively you have the combined skills to ensure that your drive to become an outstanding institution is achievable. Your ethos of 'high expectations, high achievements, challenge and enjoyment for all' reflects your expectations and informs all you do. It is shared by staff and governors alike.

One of your first actions was to overhaul the school's approaches to the assessment of pupils' learning. You have introduced regular pupils' progress meetings with teachers and a system for recording pupils' ongoing assessment information. You have created a standardisation file, which provides a useful bank of exemplar resources to support staff in their assessment judgements. As a result, teachers are held to account for pupils' outcomes well, assessment is accurate, and any pupils falling behind in their learning are quickly identified and supported to catch up.

You have also developed detailed 'curriculum progression' documents that identify precisely the small steps in subject-specific knowledge and skills that need to be taught for pupils to reach at least age-related expectations successfully. This is now used by staff to plan lessons that engage pupils and ensure that activities build

pupils' knowledge sequentially.

Self-evaluation is accurate because you undertake regular checks of the quality of teaching and learning in the school and complete detailed analysis of pupils' assessment outcomes. This means you know precisely what needs to improve further. Your development plan identifies these improvement points in detail. However, your measures of success are not focused sharply enough upon the improvements to pupils' outcomes you desire. This makes it difficult for leaders to evaluate the impact of actions taken accurately. You are outward facing and seek to find new approaches and use research findings to improve practice further to ensure pupils excel. You know that pupils' academic success is intrinsically linked to their emotional well-being and, as a result, you have invested heavily in ensuring that pupils and their families are well supported. Such is your commitment to staff and pupils' mental health that you have secured a well-being award for your work in supporting everyone in school. You have sought out a wide range of professional services to supplement your support to pupils. This ensures that pupils are well placed for learning and relationships are strong. As a result, pupils' combined attainment at the expected standard for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 are above the national average. Pupils are prepared successfully for the next stage of their education.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and well-mannered and are keen to discuss their work with adults. Pupils' movement around the school is orderly because of the established routines that manage the high number of pupils with precision. Playtime is lively, and equally well managed. There are lots of activities on offer for pupils to join and they are supported by an array of lunchtime supervisors. The playground library is a marvellous addition to the resources on offer to pupils. It is an inviting building and is stocked well with a host of children's literature to entice the most reluctant readers into the world of stories and adventures. It is testimony to the quality of contributions from the school's pupil-councillors, whose hard work raised funds to commission it. The building sits proudly in the playground and is run each day by highly capable librarians who share their love of reading with their peers.

Governors are equally committed to the school and are highly skilled. They share your high expectations for pupils to be successful and undertake their duties with diligence. They play a full part in school life and their role in monitoring the work of the school is well established. This provides them with a very good understanding of the strengths that exist in the school and the areas for further improvement. Governors invest in supporting the next generation of new leaders to ensure that there is 'strength in depth' to maintain high standards in all aspects of school life. Records of their meetings show the detailed questioning afforded to you and other leaders to secure further improvement.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You complete detailed checks on anyone wishing to work with children to ensure that they are fit to do so. The record of these checks is maintained and reviewed regularly by you and by the safeguarding governor. All staff access regular training,

and all are fully aware of the important role they play in keeping children safe. Although you lead a large school, relationships between staff and pupils are strong, and your systems are sufficiently effective to ensure that the slightest changes in pupils' demeanour are reported immediately. A review of your records shows that referrals to other agencies are timely and that you maintain a precise chronology of the actions you take to protect each child at risk of harm.

Pupils' absence is managed effectively and close working relationships with the local authority attendance officer ensures that all pupils not in attendance are accounted for quickly to ensure that they are safe. Your high expectation for full attendance and punctuality is shared with parents. Because of this, pupils' absence is reducing and attendance rates are above the national average.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the end of key stage 2, pupils' overall attainment at the expected standard is above the national average. However, in 2018, pupils' progress in writing was well below average and their attainment at the higher standard was also below the national average for all pupils and for boys. We found that you have completed detailed analysis of 2018 Year 6 pupils' outcomes and identified shortcomings in pupils' handwriting and spelling skills. You are taking strong action to tackle these relative weaknesses this year. You are also increasing the focus on extending pupils' vocabulary by introducing a 'word of the day' that pupils are expected to use in their writing. Teachers are also mindful of choosing activities that appeal to all pupils, particularly boys. These actions are evident in pupils' books and are contributing to the improving progress seen in current pupils' outcomes, including those of boys.
- A review of pupils' writing, in all year groups, indicated that pupils are expected to write in a range of styles, and are doing so with increasing confidence and success. Their work in English is well presented and demonstrates pupils' abilities to sustain their style over longer pieces of work. However, the use of standard English in pupils' writing for other subjects, and their application of such skills, is not of an equally high standard. For example: pupils' writing of explanations in English are detailed and sequential and of a high standard, but the same text in science or geography is not of a similar standard. We agreed that this is an area for further improvement and will provide pupils with increasing opportunities to consolidate their writing skills.
- A focus for the inspection was to review the quality of teaching and learning in the early years. We also wanted to gauge how effectively leaders have tackled the area for improvement given at the last inspection to increase parental involvement in their child's learning journals. Historically, children's attainment has been below the national average and had declined over time. In 2018 that changed, and outcomes improved markedly. A review of current children's attainment shows that this improvement is continuing. A new approach to assessing children's achievement is also in place, which monitors children's progress across the year. Additional support and intervention are then put in place to ensure that children catch up quickly in their learning. The new assessment system also enables parents to access their child's learning from

home, which has increased their involvement. A raft of parent events, such as 'stay and play' and 'curriculum workshops', are supporting parents to contribute more fully than was previously the case.

- The early years leader has a good understanding of how young children learn and ensures that planning is consistent and is responsive to children's needs. Consequently, children are confident and happy in their setting and are making good progress from their starting points. However, when children are accessing free-choice activities, adults' interventions are not timely enough to ensure that children's thinking is deepened, particularly when children are accessing outdoor learning.
- A further focus of the inspection was to check the actions leaders are taking to ensure that additional funding received to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are leading to their good progress. We found that leaders are highly enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They review pupils' achievement regularly and have recently completed a detailed audit of provision to ensure its value. They ensure that money is spent effectively and accounted for meticulously. It is used to provide bespoke support when needed and to ensure that pupils can access appropriate resources. Because there are relatively small proportions of both disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, this can skew their overall outcomes markedly. However, their progress from their varying starting points is plotted carefully to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are making good progress against the appropriate targets set for them.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvement planning is focused sharply on the gains in pupils' outcomes desired so that they can be evaluated more accurately than is currently the case
- pupils' use of standard written English in a range of subjects is comparable in quality to that seen in pupils' English books
- adults' intervention in children's free-choice play in the early years is timely and extends children's thinking and learning accordingly.

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

Diane Buckle  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you and your senior leadership team to discuss aspects of the school's work. You shared your own evaluations of the effectiveness of the school and your improvement plans. We observed pupils' learning in lessons in most classes. We reviewed pupils' assessment information and work in pupils' books. These reviews were undertaken alongside members of your senior leadership team.

We analysed a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and attendance, along with reports from your school improvement adviser. I talked to pupils about their learning and heard them read during lessons and more formally at lunchtime.

We took account of the 86 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's parental inspection questionnaire, as well as your own parental consultation activities. In addition, we reviewed the results of Ofsted's pupil and staff survey. We met with seven members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and held a telephone conversation with the school improvement adviser.