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Mrs Deborah Walker
Headteacher
Moat Farm Infant School
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Dear Mrs Walker

Short inspection of Moat Farm Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

You and your newly formed leadership team know the school very well and have an accurate awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You have a strong vision for learning and high expectations for staff and pupils. You, and your staff, have fostered a strong and inclusive ethos which promotes care and kindness across school. This can be seen in the positive relationships between staff and pupils.

As a result of monitoring and staff training, attainment across the school is rising. You are not complacent and are keen to ensure that all groups of learners make equally strong progress. You ensure that staff know the progress data of their pupils well. You and your team are committed to ensuring that pupils receive a high quality of education.

The school is a welcoming and friendly environment. It is tidy, organised and attractive. Pupils' work is celebrated and every space is put to good use. There has been a focus on developing playground provision at lunch and breaktimes. Pupils have access to a range of fun activities including games, building and dancing. Pupils use this area well and the introduction of playground buddies is having a positive impact on the relationships between pupils.

Pupils are highly positive about their school and pupils told me that 'school is fun'. Pupils are friendly, polite and are courteous towards each other. Behaviour in lessons and around school is strong and pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. This is a happy school.

The school makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught to respect the views and beliefs of others. There are planned opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of a range of religions and to visit places of worship. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

All of the parents that I spoke to in the playground were exceptionally positive about the school. They said that communication and relationships with staff are strong and they know who to go to if they have any issues. Several parents said their children have grown in confidence and others said they are particularly happy with the support they have received for their children with special educational needs. The majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, agree that children are happy and learning at school. The vast majority of parents would recommend this school to other parents. This is testament to leaders' hard work and commitment in ensuring that pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Many strengths were identified in the previous inspection report including 'consistently enthusiastic attitudes to learning', 'behaviour' and 'strong classroom relationships'. These remain strengths of the school. Leaders have dealt effectively with the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders take effective measures to keep pupils safe from harm. If leaders believe the right support is not in place, they challenge professionals to ensure that pupils' needs are met.

A number of school initiatives each make a significant contribution to ensuring the safeguarding of pupils. A family support worker provides further help and guidance to families when needed. This is helping to promote better attendance for most of these pupils. All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and regular follow-up questionnaires throughout the year to ensure that important safeguarding information is retained. Systems for monitoring staff and pupils' use of the internet are in place and regularly monitored by school staff. There are rigorous procedures in place for checking the suitability of people who work at the school and visitors to school.

All the parents that I spoke to, and the majority of parents that filled in the Ofsted online questionnaire, said that their children feel safe in school. Safeguarding is taught through the curriculum and pupils can talk, at an age-appropriate level, about keeping themselves safe including when online. They have a strong

knowledge of anti-bullying and can talk about their learning from 'anti-bullying week'.

Inspection findings

- Leaders are aware of the areas in which school needs to improve and have put in place actions to address weaknesses in pupils' outcomes and teaching and learning. However, the school improvement plan is very extensive and does not provide a clear enough focus on key school priorities and intended impact.
- Governors are highly enthusiastic and committed to developing their role. They are a newly formed team and the chair of the governing body has only recently been appointed. They are eager to support the work of the school and visit regularly to attend workshops and meet with subject leaders. They have also been part of the school's monitoring procedures. However, this newly formed team are not clear on their strategic role. As a result, they are not yet able to effectively challenge leaders or hold them accountable for the progress of the pupils and the impact of school improvement initiatives.
- Leaders closely monitor the progress and attainment of groups of pupils throughout school. This enables them to identify underperforming groups effectively and they are very aware of the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. Leaders take appropriate steps to ensure that this important group of pupils are well monitored and appropriate interventions are targeted towards their needs. Additional funding that school receives has been mainly spent on resources such as speech and language interventions and play therapy. Interventions are monitored and, as a result, disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress over their time at school. As a result, gaps between their achievement and that of other pupils are narrowing, particularly in reading and mathematics. The progress of disadvantaged pupils in writing is not as strong and there is still a significant gap between disadvantaged and other pupils by the end of Year 2.
- Writing was an area for development noted in the previous inspection report. The writing team have introduced school-based initiatives and structured programmes to develop pupils' presentation and handwriting. In Nursery and Reception there is a wealth of opportunities for children to develop their writing skills through an increase in mark-making activities and the direct teaching of writing. Consequently, writing results have improved at the end of Reception for the past three years. In key stage 1, improvements have been made in handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work. Pupils have ample opportunities, across the curriculum, to write at length and for different purposes. Writing results at the end of Year 2 have been above the national average for the past two years. However, during the inspection, incorrect teaching of writing was observed in several classes. Pupils are not always taught accurately the skills they need to write effective sentences which make sense.
- School leaders are very aware of the gaps between girls' and boys' attainment. Leaders work with teachers to ensure that the curriculum enables boys to thrive and make progress in line with girls. In Year 2, pupils were enthused about their learning on the Second World War and could talk with passion about facts and

findings. This learning style permeates all areas of the curriculum and learning is active and fun. Topics begin with a 'stunning starter' which is usually a visit or practical experience. For example, Year 2 visited Cannock Chase Museum and made vegetable soup linked to their topic on the Second World War. As a result of exciting topics and cross-curricular learning, boys' learning behaviour is strong and they are making good progress from their low starting points. Generally, boys enter nursery at a lower starting point to girls and that gap is narrowed once they leave at the end of Year 2. However, boys' achievement is more rapid in reading and mathematics than in writing, where only 66% reached the expected standard.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the focus and intended impact in the school improvement plan is sharpened in order that there is a shared understanding of school priorities
- capacity to drive improvement and hold leaders to account grows through the development of the knowledge and understanding of governors in their role in strategic improvement
- there is accurate teaching and modelling of writing skills within lessons to enable pupils to effectively improve their work and be able to explain their learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Melonie Davies
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I held discussions with the senior leadership team. I met with a group of leaders responsible for the development of writing. I also met members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I considered the 17 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and spoke to parents in the playground. I joined you and your deputy in short visits to classes to observe learning. I spoke with pupils on the playground and also spoke with pupils in lessons. I looked through pupils' books and scrutinised documentation, including the school's own evaluation of its performance and the school improvement plan. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures, including policies. I scrutinised checks made by the school on staff employed in school, and checked the school website. The views of staff were considered through the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire about the school.