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13 May 2019

Mrs Sally Lamb  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Lamb

### **Short inspection of Old Moat Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 24 April 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. I would like to thank your head of school, Oliver Kerr, for his valuable contribution to the inspection in your unavoidable absence. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in July 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Over recent years, leaders have faced many challenges in relation to staffing. This has included developing the leadership capacity at the school. There is now an established and knowledgeable leadership team which is making many improvements. The chief executive officer of the trust supports leaders admirably. As a result, the school is going from strength to strength.

The school's motto, 'All different, all achieving', has set a culture of high expectations and one where pupils' differences are valued and celebrated. Leaders are clearly focused on supporting every child to succeed in an environment where their well-being is of central importance.

The school's collaborative and professional culture enables teachers and teaching assistants to learn from each other and share what is working well. Staff morale is high. Staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey commended the leadership of the school, especially in supporting their well-being. There are many opportunities for staff to take on additional responsibilities in school. Many of the newly created leaders have been 'grown' from within the school. This is an area of strength in the school and one that leaders plan to continue.

Standards have been rising in key stage 2 over the last two years. The progress that pupils make is now strong, especially in reading and mathematics. In 2018, the

proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average.

Pupils behave well in class and around school. They are caring towards each other, and confident and keen to share their opinions. The pupils I spoke with said that they enjoy learning because teachers do their very best to make it fun. There are a range of leadership opportunities for pupils. For example, they can be prefects, computer technicians or head gardeners. Pupils told me that they enjoy looking after their school and each other. They also enjoy raising money for local charities. They were also keen to explain the reasons why they had made a garden shed from plastic bottles in the 'Green Heroes Club'. Comments included, 'We are trying to make the world a better place.'

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and at the core of the school's ethos. The safeguarding leader ensures that records are detailed and of the highest quality. She provides information for parents and carers, and visitors, so that they understand their role in keeping children safe. Staff and governors receive comprehensive training. They are clear about what to do if they have any concerns about pupils' safety or well-being. The checks that leaders undertake on the suitability of adults to work with pupils are thorough.

Pupils told me that they always feel safe in school. They value the relationships that they have with the staff and believe this to be a strength at the school. A typical comment, reflecting the views of many pupils spoken to, was that, 'Teachers at this school respect you and they never give up on you'. Those whom I spoke with said that bullying did not happen. Pupils were also keen to tell me that behaviour had improved a lot in the last year, especially at lunchtimes, because of the actions that leaders had taken. Pupils have a good understanding of how they can stay safe online and in the local community.

### **Inspection findings**

- As part of this inspection, I focused on several lines of enquiry. The first was to see whether attendance had improved for all pupils. I also looked at whether persistent absenteeism had reduced, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders are meticulous in their monitoring of attendance. Thorough systems ensure that the attendance of all groups of pupils is monitored effectively. Swift intervention is implemented where required, to work with pupils with poor attendance. Leaders work closely with external agencies to provide help and support for families. As a last resort, parents are fined when necessary. As a result of actions taken, the proportion of pupils who are absent or persistently absent from school has reduced this year and is currently in line with the national average, especially for pupils with SEND.
- My next line of enquiry concerned outcomes for children in early years who are supported by pupil premium funding. This enquiry was because the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was significantly below the

national average. Children get off to a good start in school in early years. They learn in a vibrant and well-resourced environment, where they grow in confidence and become independent, inquisitive learners. Children listen to adults eagerly and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Adult- and child-initiated activities help to develop children's basic reading and mathematical skills and foster a love of learning. For example, in a reading activity, the teacher asked the children to go on a hunt for different words. The children excitedly read their text, shouting out when they found the words. Children are keen to share their learning. Several of the Reception children explained how I could make a flower with them. They used their phonic skills effectively to read the labels on the activity.

- Leaders have identified the barriers to making good progress for children who are supported by pupil premium funding. For example, leaders know that many of these children have difficulties with language and communication when they start school. Consequently, additional staff have been employed to teach small groups and provide one-to-one sessions. Speech and language programmes have been implemented. Additional resources have also been purchased to improve provision further. From very low starting points, these children make good progress. Despite this, leaders are determined that even more children who are supported by pupil premium funding will achieve a good level of development.
- Another area explored was the progress that pupils are making in key stage 1. Over the last two years, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been in the bottom 20% of schools nationally. In 2018, this declined further in reading and writing. Leaders have identified this as an area for improvement, and as a result, have made many changes to improve teaching and learning in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders regularly evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. They use this information to ensure that teachers receive appropriate training. Teachers have been well supported by the leaders for English and mathematics. Consequently, teachers' subject knowledge is improving. Work in pupils' books shows that lessons are now planned to match pupils' needs. As a result of these changes, current school assessment information shows that pupils are beginning to make strong progress.
- I also explored how effectively leaders ensure that pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding achieve at the expected and higher standards in writing in key stage 2. Leaders have used the funding for disadvantaged pupils creatively. There are additional staff who teach smaller writing groups and provide individually taught lessons. Writing is taught well across key stage 2. The work in the books of pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding demonstrates that they make good progress.
- In 2018, the progress that pupils made in their writing improved, including for those who are disadvantaged. This is because strategies to improve the teaching of writing have been effective. However, further time is needed to embed these approaches so that pupils' progress is as strong as it is in reading and mathematics.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a greater proportion of children who are supported by pupil premium funding achieve a good level of development in Reception Year
- they further improve the quality of teaching and strengthen the progress that pupils make in key stage 1
- the new approaches to the teaching of writing continue to be embedded, so that pupils make even stronger progress across key stage 2.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the trust, the chief executive officer, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Manchester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Barlow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I observed teaching and learning and scrutinised examples of pupils' work. I met with you and the chief executive officer for the trust. I also met with the leaders for English and mathematics, the finance manager, the family support worker and the designated safeguarding leader. I spoke with pupils in key stage 2 and with pupils informally in lessons and around the school. I also spoke with three governors, including the chair of the governing body.

I evaluated the 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and took account of the 23 free-text responses from parents. I also took account of 22 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. I reviewed a range of school documents. These included: the school's self-evaluation; the school's development plans and assessment records; minutes of governing body meetings; safeguarding documentation; and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. I also considered information posted on the school's website.