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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Pauline Pollard
Headteacher
Moorthorpe Primary (J and I) School
Regent Street
Moorthorpe
Pontefract
West Yorkshire
WF9 2BL

Dear Mrs Pollard

Short inspection of Moorthorpe Primary (J and I) School

Following my visit to the school on 8 March 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 July 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You, the staff and governors have established a welcoming school, popular in the local community, in which pupils behave well and make good progress at key stage 2. In the last two years, Year 6 pupils made particularly rapid progress in mathematics from their starting points at the end of key stage 1. Parents say their children love coming to school and that staff support their learning and development well.

However, too many pupils are persistently absent. This is mainly due to parents taking them on holiday in term time. The school is among the worst 10% of primary schools in England for pupil absence. There has been little improvement in the current school year. Leaders and governors are not taking sufficient action to persuade and educate parents not to take their children on holiday in term time.

Children do not get off to a rapid enough start in the early years and fewer than half of Reception children reached a good level of development in 2017. Attainment at the end of key stage 1 is well below average. In 2017, attainment at key stage 1 was in the lowest 10% nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

The previous inspection report asked the school to ensure that teaching is of consistently high quality. Teaching has been effective in bringing about good outcomes at key stage 2. Current teaching in the early years is beginning to bring about more rapid learning and development for the youngest children. There is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching at key stage 1.

The report also asked the school to improve achievement in writing. At key stage 2, attainment and progress in writing is in line with national averages. At key stage 1, fewer than half of the Year 2 pupils reached the expected standard in writing in 2017. Over the last two years, only one Year 2 pupil attained above this standard in writing. None attained a greater depth in mathematics.

Senior and subject leaders do not use data effectively enough when evaluating teaching and learning. Leaders' reviews of teaching and pupils' progress are not sharply enough focused on the school's improvement priorities. Leaders do not check on the impact of actions systematically enough to ensure rapid improvement in pupils' progress and attainment.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are alert to signs of safeguarding concerns and report them appropriately to the safeguarding leaders. Staff receive appropriate training and updates about safeguarding issues. Leaders respond promptly to emerging concerns. They make appropriate referrals and are persistent in following up concerns with other agencies. The school's good links with other agencies provide a useful and diverse range of specialist support for vulnerable pupils. Pupils are aware of internet safety and talk knowledgeably about the dangers of social media. Governors regularly check that leaders are carrying out safeguarding actions effectively.

Inspection findings

- Governors ask useful questions but do not have a sharp enough focus on outcomes, particularly at key stage 1 and in the early years. The governing body supports the school strongly but some members have not developed a sufficiently critical approach to school governance.
- At key stage 2, pupils enjoy learning from the models of writing provided by teachers. They benefit from drama and role play which help them to develop their ideas and language. Teachers' constructive and precise written and verbal feedback enables pupils to improve their work well.
- Attainment in the early years is well below average because children do not make a rapid enough start and too few secure a good level of development by the end of Reception. Staff are taking effective action to accelerate progress in Nursery. For example, increased use of role play, mark-making and pencil-grip activities are developing children's communication, language and literacy skills quickly.

Staff are focusing more sharply on the needs of the most able children to enable them to exceed the good level of development.

- At key stage 1, teachers' good relationships, precise learning objectives and well-structured activities are enabling pupils to make good progress in lessons. However, on occasion teaching lacks focus, activities are disconnected and pupils become restless. Teachers do not always make efficient use of teaching assistants to lead pupils' learning. Expectations of the most able pupils are not high enough. The most able pupils write accurately but not at sufficient length or complexity. As a result, they are not demonstrating the coherence, vocabulary and grammar to attain a greater depth at the end of Year 2.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- consistently good teaching increases pupils' progress and attainment at key stage 1
- higher expectations enable the most able pupils to attain the higher standards at the end of the early years and key stage 1
- Nursery children get off to a quicker start and more children attain a good level of development by the end of Reception
- leaders and governors use data more effectively to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning
- leaders and governors check actions by staff more systematically to ensure that actions have impact and meet school improvement priorities
- leaders and governors take effective action to dissuade parents from taking children out of school during term time and to reduce the high levels of absence.

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

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, senior and middle leaders, two members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils. I also spoke to parents bringing children to school. I jointly observed teaching with you and the deputy headteacher and I discussed pupils' work with a middle leader.

I checked the school website and examined a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, school plans, assessment information, and safeguarding records. I took account of two responses from staff, 23 responses from parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire and 10 written responses from parents.