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Ms Lara Stone
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Lara Stone

Short inspection of Moat Farm Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 3 May 2017, 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Under your strong leadership, there is an ambitious vision, team spirit and a relentless drive for continual improvement. There is a strong culture of professional learning and accountability among staff within the school. Staff are proud to work at Moat Farm Junior School. This was summed up by one member of staff, who said, 'I feel lucky to be working here. Moat Farm is such a positive place to work and learn.' Staff and governors model the values that are at the heart of the school, and as a result leaders have successfully created a safe, caring environment where pupils eagerly seek to achieve the high academic expectations set for them. You clearly demonstrated throughout the inspection that your ethos 'there is no ceiling on a child's potential' is the driving principle behind you and your team's efforts to continue to improve.

The vast majority of parents hold the school in high regard. They appreciate the strong focus by you and your team on engaging and motivating pupils to learn and the care given to ensure that pupils' individual needs are met. The school's core values underpin the work of the school through a strong inclusive ethos. Comments from parents included: 'I couldn't be happier that my children attend this school, I feel very lucky.' You and the leadership team have ensured that the curriculum is varied and balanced. Teachers use a range of stimulating topics to deliver exciting content that captures pupils' interest and stimulates enquiry. One parent summed up the impact your curriculum is having on pupils when they said, 'My child comes home every day excited about what they have learned, especially when they have

achieved the harder challenge given the name 'chilli challenges' by the school.' Staff enrich the curriculum through additional trips and visits to provide a real context for pupils' learning. During the inspection pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the extra-curricular activities and the exciting trips that the school provides.

Following the last inspection, leaders have taken effective action to ensure that good practice in teaching is disseminated across the school to improve teaching, and as a consequence outcomes for pupils have continued to improve. Pupils show high levels of enthusiasm and focus during lessons. Pupils use their well-developed phonics skills to help them decode unfamiliar words with a high degree of accuracy and to support their spelling of more adventurous words to improve their writing. Leaders have made good progress towards ensuring that pupils are able to transfer their skills in literacy to their work in other subjects. For example, after a recent visit to Selly Manor pupils had to take on the role of estate agents to write a persuasive sales brochure to sell the manor house. Pupils produced many examples of exceptionally high-quality writing because staff had created a stimulating and contextually meaningful purpose for pupils to apply their writing skills. However, pupils need more opportunities to use their skills and knowledge in mathematics in other subjects. There are some very promising recent examples found in pupils' work in some classes but not widely enough across the school, such as the good use of topic work on science and geography for some year groups to apply their skills in place value to measure distances to faraway planets in our solar system and the use of fractions in geography to make comparisons.

Through your regular reviews of teaching and learning leaders have identified that fluency in reading is a strength but that inference and comprehension need further development to enable pupils to increase their depth of knowledge and understanding of what they are reading. Inspection evidence confirms that rates of progress are improving securely across current cohorts but you recognise further work is still required to embed recent improvements in order to bring about the outcomes for all groups of pupils that you are striving for in reading and writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

Processes that are in place in order to safeguard pupils are robust and effective. Leaders have very clear expectations of the role that staff play to safeguard pupils' safety and welfare. These expectations are supported by regular and effective training. Staff are clear about the actions that they should take if they identify any areas of concern and there is a culture of high vigilance around safeguarding issues. Leaders responsible for safeguarding provide timely and appropriate additional support for pupils who require it. Records of actions taken are meticulously kept and of high quality.

Pupils are taught well how to keep themselves safe and can talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For example the school's E-safety Pupil Council provides advice and support for other pupils about how to keep safe on the internet, online games and when using social media. Pupils are clear about who they can talk to at school if they are worried or have concerns about

their welfare or that of their friends. Pupils state that they feel safe at school. Staff and the vast majority of parents agree that pupils are safe as a result of the effective systems that are in place and the school's culture of safeguarding.

Inspection findings

- Support and challenge by leaders has improved the quality of teaching and learning, especially in mathematics. School staff comment on how leaders have created a culture of continual learning and improvement to ensure that teaching and provision adapts to meet the specific needs of all groups of pupils. Consequently, rates of progress in mathematics have improved and are now being sustained across all current cohorts.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is planned and adapted effectively to meet the learning needs of all pupils, especially those who have low prior attainment and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, in writing pupils across the school apply their well-developed skills including spelling, grammar and punctuation, to produce high-quality pieces of work. Progress from pupils' prior starting points is good in their writing from the beginning of the academic year.
- Pupils entitled to pupil premium funding are making progress that is similar to that of other pupils nationally and increasing numbers are making accelerated progress because the school is being successful in engaging them in high-quality teaching and learning. Leaders have created the right conditions to support learning and curriculum design is stimulating and challenging. Pupils demonstrate that they are eager to learn and want to do well.
- Middle-prior-attaining pupils have made good progress in mathematics because leaders have effectively improved the quality of teaching and provision in mathematics to meet the specific needs of all. Leaders have used precise analysis to identify the key next steps in pupils' learning in mathematics. As a result pupils report they enjoy and feel successful in mathematics because they 'like to be challenged' and 'have the strategies to find a solution'. However, inspection evidence confirmed that to develop greater depth of understanding in mathematics pupils need further opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge in mathematics in appropriate contexts across the wider curriculum.
- Pupils overwhelmingly stated that they enjoyed reading and spoke with real enthusiasm about the books they were reading. The school has developed a strong culture of reading for pleasure among pupils. Pupils read fluently because they have well-developed phonic skills. Pupils use these phonics skills to aid their spelling in their written work. Not enough pupils are achieving the higher standards in reading compared to similar pupils nationally from similar starting points. Leaders are taking effective action to address lower outcomes in the higher standard in reading by using a range of whole-class and individualised teaching strategies to develop these skills and as a result currently all groups of pupils across the school are making good rates of progress in reading. However, the use of inference and comprehension when reading is often hampered by pupils' lack of understanding of higher-level vocabulary from more challenging

texts. This holds back pupils' ability to achieve a deeper level of understanding of what they have read.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching continues to develop pupils' comprehension of what they read and their skills in applying inference to improve outcomes in reading
- teaching continues to develop pupils' mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding within the wider curriculum in contextually meaningful ways to develop greater depth in their learning in mathematics.

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

John Demmerling
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your senior leadership team. I also met with a group of governors. I held a discussion with the chair by telephone. I met with a representative from the local authority. You and your deputy headteachers joined me on visits to classes. We looked at examples of pupils' work.

I talked to pupils about their work during visits to their classes, met with a group of pupils and informally spoke to pupils around school at different times of the school day. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation of its performance, the school development plan and documents relating to keeping pupils safe. We discussed the most recent information about pupils' achievement. I took account of 17 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and there were no free-text comments to consider. I reviewed the three responses from members of staff to the online inspection questionnaire. I spoke with parents at the end of the school day. I also looked at information published on the school's website