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Mrs June Pritchard  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Pritchard

### **Short inspection of Thrupp School**

Following my visit to the school on 29 September 2015, 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 March 2011.

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

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

- You provide inspirational leadership, with high aspirations and a determination for all pupils to be successful learners. Your staff share your ambition and drive.
- You, along with your staff and governors, know the school well. You continue to build on the school's strengths and have successfully tackled those areas identified as needing improvement at the last inspection.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils are provided with more opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and to know how much progress they are making.
- Problem-solving activities and investigations have become integral to the curriculum, providing pupils with the opportunity to put their learning into practice. Pupils continue to make strong progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils and parents talk positively about the school's strong and caring ethos. This allows pupils to develop academically, socially and emotionally into confident young people.
- Pupils enjoy school and this is evident in their regular attendance.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

School leaders and governors place the highest priority on the safeguarding of all pupils. Robust systems are rigorously implemented. There is a strong culture of safety and security within the school. Staff and governors receive high-quality safeguarding training to keep them well informed on all types of risk to children. Leaders carefully evaluate the risk of any activity, such as when pupils use the local environment to enhance their learning. Pupils are confident that they can share any concerns they may have with an adult. They comment that their school is a safe and happy place to be, where they are well looked after.

The leadership team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. They are tenacious in following up any concerns and work effectively with outside agencies to keep pupils safe.

## **Inspection findings**

- Staff, pupils and parents are extremely complimentary about your leadership. The strengths identified in the previous inspection remain. During the past academic year you recognised that children were not doing as well as they could in the early years. You quickly tackled this area of concern, resulting in a significant increase in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development. This ensures children are prepared well for Year 1.
- Your evaluation accurately identifies the areas in which the school needs to improve. In particular, leaders acknowledge that the quality of the outdoor provision in the early years is not yet good enough. There is clear evidence of effective action being taken to bring about these improvements.
- You have a strong teaching team and an astute governing body which provides you with a good balance of support and challenge. Like you, staff and governors have high aspirations and a determination to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can. Consequently, pupils in your school develop a love of learning that helps them to achieve well.
- Teachers find inspiring ways to teach which excite and motivate pupils. Topics chosen are well tailored to meet the needs of pupils. They relish the learning opportunities and challenges they experience. For example, the recent 'circus skills' activity made them develop their resilience, perseverance, determination and reflection, all invaluable life skills. They particularly enjoy theme weeks and talked with passion and excitement about the current theme, 'challenges and collaboration'. This was reflected in the assembly observed during the inspection: this was planned and led by the school's 'learning detectives', an illustration of how leaders provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning.

- All teachers have leadership responsibilities due to the small size of the school. They work effectively to provide the best educational experience they can for their pupils. Together they quickly and accurately identify areas of weakness and agree actions to ensure rapid improvement. For example, pupils' progress in reading and writing has improved significantly as a result of the changes made to the curriculum.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Most able pupils achieve well and mostly make good progress. However, they could make even better progress in mathematics.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a range of exciting opportunities which gives them the impetus to plan their own learning and to take greater responsibility. As a result, pupils are significantly improving their skills as independent learners, contributing to their strong progress. Pupils describe how teachers provide them with clear guidance on the progress they are making and how they can further improve their work. They feel able to develop their skills as learners.
- Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the work they do and they welcome the increased opportunity to carry out investigations in a wide range of subjects. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 were exploring how to keep the temperature of a liquid constant. They had to think carefully about how to carry out an effective investigation and the learning skills needed.
- There is a well-established culture of fairness and respect. This is exemplified in setting and maintaining high expectations of behaviour. The school's rules take the form of a set of 'rights' agreed by staff and pupils: for example, 'a right to be safe, a right to learn and a right to be treated with respect'. Pupils, staff and parents talk positively about behaviour and the strong relationships throughout the school. Pupils say it is a very happy and caring place. They feel safe, well supported and enjoy their learning.
- You have worked effectively with parents to tackle lateness to ensure pupils do not miss any learning. As a result, there has been a significant improvement in punctuality.
- Parents are very appreciative of the way in which you and your staff strive relentlessly to ensure that every pupil thrives. This clearly reflects the school motto, 'Doing our best to be our best'. They welcome the care and guidance their children receive. They describe how the school has created a culture of success, where pupils are praised for their achievements and supported with any difficulties. They comment favourably on how you instil in their children a willingness to 'simply have a go', and not to be afraid of getting something wrong. As a result, parents comment that their children are confident, independent learners who enjoy the experiences the school has to offer.

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

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- plans to improve the outdoor provision in the early years are carried out so that children have access to high-quality learning opportunities across all areas of learning
- they further improve the progress of the most-able pupils, especially in mathematics.

Yours sincerely

Jen Southall

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, your staff, governors and an officer from the local authority to discuss pupils' progress and the improvements the school has made since the last inspection. Together we visited lessons to observe teaching and to look at pupils' work. I spoke with parents at the start of the day and looked at the survey results from Parent View. I also spoke to a group of pupils. I checked the accuracy of your self-evaluation along with other documentation. I also checked the effectiveness of your safeguarding arrangements and your work to ensure the regular attendance and punctuality of your pupils.