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Miss Amanda Lightfoot
Headteacher
Austhorpe Primary School
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Dear Miss Lightfoot

Short inspection of Austhorpe Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 January 2016 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. The new headteacher has been in post for a year, and in that time has managed a period of instability well. She has created a strong leadership team, cleverly balancing existing strengths from within the school and employing new staff to strengthen gaps. Leaders have a wealth of complementary skills and experiences which they are using to further raise expectations and share good practice throughout the school. This is helping to drive up standards in Key Stage 2, and further increase the pace of improvements. Change has been successfully managed by leaders, and staff are extremely positive about the journey the school is on. Every member of staff strongly agrees that the school is well led and managed and has improved since the last inspection.

The key strengths highlighted in the last inspection remain. The positive ethos for learning allows pupils to flourish in a safe and secure environment. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils are taught from an early age how to behave appropriately and the strong emphasis on positive reinforcement supports them throughout their time in school. Children engage well in their lessons, are courteous and show respect to each other.

The majority of areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been tackled and where any remain these are noted as key actions within the school development plan. Assessment procedures are now rigorous and information is routinely checked through internal monitoring and by other professionals who work

with the school. External moderation ensures the validity of outcomes at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 writing.

Parent View results show high levels of satisfaction. Parents recognise the high quality of care shown by all staff and know their children are happy, safe and well looked after. More opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning are being developed throughout the school, particularly within the early years.

Safeguarding is effective.

Systems and procedures are in place to ensure that safeguarding is effective within the school. Regular training is in place for all staff and governors, ensuring all staff know how to keep children safe. External agencies are used well to support individual pupils. Case studies show timely interventions and detailed records set out actions taken. Leaders are committed to safeguarding all pupils within the school. Attendance levels remain high.

Inspection findings

- In her efforts to further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, the headteacher identified key areas of underperformance and tackled them quickly. As a result, weak teaching has been eradicated and the quality of teaching across the whole school is strong and improving. Leaders analyse a range of evidence which gives them an accurate view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment throughout the school. The headteacher uses external professionals to substantiate her judgements.
- Governors offer challenge and support for the headteacher. They have a wide variety of different skills, adding to and further strengthening the capacity of the leadership team. They know the key strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors have a clear understanding that teaching, learning and assessment in Key Stage 2 need to continue to improve if the school is to become outstanding.
- In the early years children have opportunities to practise and develop basic skills in a safe environment. The organisation of the learning environment allows children to work both independently and alongside adults on well-planned activities. More-able children are given challenging tasks which further extend their learning. Children who find learning more challenging are given extra support to help them reach national expectations. For example, in the mathematical area, one girl worked on her own, identifying patterns using addition facts to 20. She could explain what she was doing and showed a high level of concentration. Outside, children working with the teacher secured their counting skills to 20 using blocks.
- Children are developing a love of reading from an early age. They spoke enthusiastically about one of their favourite authors and could list many of her books. A range of activities based on stories enabled the children to explain which story was their favourite and give reasons why. Phonics

attainment is well above the national average, and rigorous systems support pupils at all levels. The use of a 'phonics lead', who works alongside all staff, ensures consistency of approach across both early years and Key Stage 1. Teaching younger children to read is a strength of the school.

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been consistently above national averages. Pupils are well supported and are challenged through a variety of interesting topics and skilled teaching. High standards of writing demonstrate the wide range of opportunities pupils are given to write in a variety of different styles. Observations during the inspection showed that pupils were motivated and engaged in their learning. In a mathematics lesson, children were keen to demonstrate their developing knowledge of times tables and work was closely matched to ability. Basic skills are being well taught and pupils enjoy their learning.
- Attainment in Key Stage 2 has remained stable over the last four years, and has only recently shown signs of improvement in 2015. However, new staffing arrangements, increased expectation and thorough monitoring and assessment procedures are contributing to this improvement. Writing seen in some Key Stage 2 classes shows strong evidence that standards are high and improving. Pupils know how to improve their own work and are given time to assess their own and each other's work. As a result of an increased whole-school focus on writing standards, grammar, punctuation and style are improving rapidly. Some inconsistencies remain across the key stage, particularly in the agreed length and frequency of extended writing sessions.
- Standards in mathematics remain above the national average. However, leaders are not complacent and have already identified areas which can be improved upon. Pupils are confident in basic skills, particularly times tables, and are given opportunities to apply their knowledge to enable them to deepen their understanding.
- Assessment systems enable leaders to track progress of individuals and groups carefully. Internal tracking shows that a higher proportion of pupils are already working at the level expected for their age than in previous years. Individual development plans for particular groups of pupils track progress across the whole school. This is ensuring that the high standards reached at the end of Key Stage 1 are being maintained and built upon. Leaders are keen to find the best ways of making improvements and are using the latest national research findings to help them with particular groups.
- Termly reviews ensure that teachers are held accountable for progress and interventions are quickly put in place to support individual pupils. One pupil told me that if he is struggling with his work, the teacher will work with him in class, and if he still has difficulties, then the teacher finds additional time to ensure he understands.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- standards continue to improve in Key Stage 2, particularly in writing, ensuring that pupils are given sufficient time in which they can demonstrate and practise their writing skills
- the newly established leadership team continue to build on the excellent start they have made.

Yours sincerely

Janet Lunn
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you, senior leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority. Together we observed teaching and learning in every classroom. I talked to pupils about their work and inspected their books. You provided a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan, assessment information and evidence of improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. I considered the information received from 76 Parent View responses, 28 pupil questionnaires and 18 staff questionnaires. I spoke to you and your learning mentor about safeguarding procedures, looked at one case study and checked the single central record. Alongside this, I analysed attendance information.