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Miss Louise Robinson
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Dear Miss Robinson

Short inspection of Kinsale Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 14 June 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.

You have continued to lead the school effectively and, together with your leadership team and governors, have maintained the good quality of education in the school. Since the last inspection standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have been consistently above the national average, and particularly high in reading and mathematics. This is because you share a common ambition for all pupils and maintain a keen focus on pupils' achievement in these subjects.

Alongside this, you have ensured that the school continues to be a warm and welcoming place where staff and pupils work well together. The school's vision, 'developing a love of learning for all' is put into daily practice as reflected in the highly positive comments made by pupils about their experiences at school. You and your deputy headteacher complement each other well, drawing on each other's skills to ensure the school continues to move forward. Staff feel that you and senior leaders support them well and say that they are proud to be a member of the school community.

Your leadership team carefully tracks achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, drawing up plans to improve any areas where you feel more could be done and checking the impact of actions taken. One example of this is your work to further improve the standard of writing, which has had a positive impact.

Teachers know their pupils well and enjoy positive relationships with them. Teachers plan work, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, which is helping pupils to make progress which is at least good and often better than this. Staff training has ensured that there is a common approach to areas such as providing feedback to pupils. There is also a consistent approach to teaching in the classes in each year group because teachers plan together.

Governors provide strong support for leaders. They visit the school regularly, focusing on areas from the school's development plan. They complete monitoring forms to let you and your staff know their findings and identify any areas where they would like further information. One example of this is the series of visits carried out to look at the teaching of phonics. Governors ask challenging questions of you and other leaders about pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, but they are not provided with sufficient information about pupils' achievement in other subjects. As a result they are not able to question you about whether standards in subjects such as science, for example, are as high as in reading or mathematics.

Pupils spoke about the school with evident enthusiasm, talking about how much they enjoy their learning. They told me that teachers help them with their learning, for example by explaining things carefully to them, and that teachers expect them to work hard 'especially in Year 2'. Pupils behave exceptionally well. They enjoy talking with each other and with adults. Many pupils greeted me by name and invited me to look at their books, showing pride in their work. Pupils appreciate the steps you have taken to enrich the curriculum, for example through trips and visitors to the school. They enjoy the broad and varied curriculum, talking for example about the African and Aboriginal art work that they had been doing.

Parents are highly supportive of the school. A large number of parents responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire and were almost all positive about the work that you and your team do to help their children in school. You and your staff have further improved how you work with parents and extend learning at home, which was an area for improvement at the time of the last inspection. For example, the home learning books provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in different contexts, and for parents to participate in their child's learning. Your reading cafés are another example of how you encourage parents to become more fully involved in their child's learning, promoting parents' understanding of how to help their child with reading. These are very well attended because you have ensured that the school is a welcoming place for parents as well as pupils.

Attendance is improving because you have followed up all absence rigorously, meeting with parents to talk about the reasons for absence and explaining the impact on their child's progress. You encourage good attendance in your newsletters and have introduced a new 'traffic light' initiative so that parents can see at a glance whether their child's attendance is good enough. While some parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire are unhappy about these actions, they are having a positive impact on improving attendance and helping to increase it to closer to the national average.

The Reception classes remain vibrant and exciting places for children to learn, as at the time of the last inspection. Children are provided with a broad range of interesting activities. Adults intervene with children during their play very well, extending their learning through careful questioning and discussion. Children in the Reception classes show independence, for example fetching and using resources and tidying them up before leaving the activity so that they are ready for the next person. They move between the two classes sensibly during independent learning times and are sociable and friendly. Adults identified that writing was a weaker area of achievement, reducing the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development. They have ensured that writing is now promoted within many activities. For example, clipboards were available for children to make notes as they played with the castle and a chalkboard was positioned near to a construction activity so that children can record what they have been building. As a result the proportion of pupils set to achieve a good level of development overall at the end of the year has risen and is set to rise again this year.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team ensure that pupils' safety and welfare underpins everything you do. Careful checks are carried out of all staff and other adults who work at, or regularly visit, the school and all statutory requirements for keeping pupils safe are met. You ensure that all staff are fully trained in what to do if they have a concern about a child. You also ensure that training is always up to date; for example you recently providing training around radicalisation and the 'Prevent' duty. You maintain careful records for pupils with safeguarding concerns, and take action to follow up with external agencies when necessary. You regularly carry out surveys of pupils and parents to check that pupils feel safe in school and act on any issues which are identified.

Inspection findings

- You and your team have taken effective action to improve writing standards across the school, which was an area identified in the previous inspection report. You have identified particularly that the proportion of pupils achieving above the expected standard in writing has been lower than in reading. You have ensured that teachers share equally high expectations of all pupils' writing, including the most able pupils, and that plenty of opportunities for writing are provided. Pupils are regularly expected to write at length so that they develop writing stamina, and understand how to maintain the style of writing within a longer piece. The most able pupils are expected to extend their writing further, for example by including a wider range of connectives and adverbs. You have agreed a policy for providing feedback to pupils, identifying 'next steps', and this is helping pupils to understand how they can further improve their work. You have taken steps to improve pupils' presentation, including their handwriting. As a result many pupils in Year 2 are developing a fluent handwriting style, enabling them to write with ease. Achievement in writing is rising and more pupils are attaining above the standard expected by the end of Year 2 in writing.

- You have closely analysed the reasons for the dip in achievement in the Year 1 phonics check in 2015, and reviewed how phonics is taught to satisfy yourself and governors that phonics is taught well from Reception to Year 2. Pupils enjoy regular phonics sessions where they review sounds learned previously and practise new sounds, which are modelled accurately by staff. They practise writing these sounds in contexts within words and sentences. You have provided additional support for pupils through well-trained teaching assistants, and monitored the impact of this support carefully. As a result, the teaching of phonics is strong across the school and the proportion of pupils expected to pass the Year 1 phonics assessment is set to rise this year. In addition, because of the additional support provided, almost all of the pupils who did not pass the assessment in Year 1 are on track to pass this year.
- You and senior leaders are aware of the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others at the end of Year 2. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school in reading, writing and mathematics is improving. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who make more than expected progress is not yet high enough to enable these pupils to attain the same high standard as others in the school. Fewer disadvantaged pupils attain above the expected standard in Year 1 and Year 2 than is the case for others. You have used the funding provided for these pupils to introduce initiatives such as the nurture group, which is having a positive impact on improving pupils' social skills and attitudes to learning. You know this because you assess pupils before and after a block of sessions. You involve those who lead the intervention and class teachers in checking that improvements carry across to pupils' behaviour and attitudes in everyday lessons. You also provide additional support for disadvantaged pupils within lessons, through additional teaching assistant time, as well as providing support for extra-curricular activities, breakfast club and residential trips. However, some of the expenditure is used for whole-school initiatives such as staff training rather than being closely focused on the pupils for whom it is intended.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities make good progress across the school. The leader for special educational needs tracks each pupil's progress carefully. She visits classes to check on provision, keeping a record of how teachers have modified the curriculum or resources to meet pupils' needs. She meets with teachers regularly to provide them with ideas and suggestions for supporting pupils. She ensures that class teachers recognise their responsibility for ensuring that all pupils, including those who have special educational needs or disabilities, continue to make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils enjoy an interesting and engaging curriculum taught through topics. They are provided with opportunities to learn about the world and to participate in creative activities, for example making clay animal models and making music linked to an Africa theme. Home learning enhances the curriculum well and provides additional opportunities for pupils to extend and consolidate their skills. However, while in some areas, such as science in Year 2, pupils are making strong progress in the development of their knowledge and understanding, this is not the case in all subjects. Pupils'

attainment in most foundation subjects is not yet at the same high standard as in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have this year introduced systems for tracking the progress pupils make in these subjects. These are yet to be used by leaders and provided to governors to identify where outcomes are strongest and where they could be raised still further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils achieve as well in other subjects as they do in reading, writing and mathematics
- the additional funding that the school receives for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to support their progress so that they achieve as well as others in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Maria Curry
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, the leader for early years and the leader for special educational needs. I also met with two governors and with a small number of pupils in Year 1 and Year 2. I scrutinised a range of school documents, including assessment information, information about safeguarding, school development planning and school self-evaluation. I observed teaching in all classes and pupils' work was evaluated.