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Mr John Beaven
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Dear Mr Beaven

Short inspection of Pollyplatt Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 October 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 November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Pupils continue to make good progress in their time at the school. This includes children from service families, very few of whom attend the school for the whole of their primary education.

Since the last inspection, there have been a number of staff changes, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher which has strengthened the school's leadership capacity. Your calm demeanour, sharp focus on improvement and high aspirations for every pupil at the school have proved key to the continued success of the school. Staff and governors support you in striving for the best for pupils. Members of staff and pupils new to the school are quickly welcomed into the safe and caring environment which you have created. You, your staff and the pupils work together to deliver the school's motto and 'fly beyond your limits'.

You have maintained the significant strengths noted at the previous inspection. In particular, the quality of pastoral care remains strong. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. The parents who spoke with me during the inspection were united in their praise for how you have developed the perfect balance of respect and independence in the pupils. One parent commented that her child had 'blossomed academically and her confidence increased incredibly'.

Pupils behave well and demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. From the moment that you open the school gates in the morning, pupils run excitedly to their

lessons; their positive behaviour and enthusiasm remain throughout the school day. Pupils told me that the school encourages them to be the best that they can be.

When the school was last inspected, the inspectors asked you to provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects in order to raise their attainment. You have successfully done this by revising the school curriculum. As a result, these critical skills are now assessed every morning. Pupils then practise applying them every afternoon in cross-curricular topics. For example, in one class, pupils were using a bottle they imagined they had found on a beach to link to a map of Lincolnshire and develop their map-reading skills. Pupils then thought of nouns, adjectives and verbs to describe the bottle and to help develop their vocabulary for story writing. In another lesson, pupils used a video camera to film how a monster would move, before writing up the description. These activities helped pupils to use more adventurous words in their writing.

Provisional results for writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 indicate that the pupils' achievements improved significantly this year. Your school development plan now rightly focuses on further improving the proportion of pupils who attain the higher standards.

You have appropriately worked on improving pupils' outcomes in reading. This starts in the Reception Year where children learn how to decode unfamiliar words. Teachers reinforce careful handwriting and letter formation so that children recognise letters and sounds and therefore learn to read them correctly. In 2016, pupils achieved well above the previous national standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. All pupils who retook the check at the end of Year 2 met the expected standard. The school's assessment information indicates that pupils in key stage 1 are making good progress in reading.

Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in reading were disappointingly low in 2016. You have investigated the reasons for this and have identified that pupils struggled to make inferences and deductions about texts. Evidence in pupils' books demonstrates that they are now given more opportunities to practise these skills. The school's assessment information indicates that current Year 6 pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are making good progress in reading.

Pupils' attendance has been above the national average for the past three years. However, persistent absence rose in 2015, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A very small number of pupils continue to be persistently absent from school. You are fully aware of this and have introduced a tougher absence policy to reduce the amount of time pupils miss school. The pupils I spoke with clearly understand the importance of good attendance and they value the introduction of 100% attendance awards.

Safeguarding is effective.

You are the designated safeguarding leader. You have completed all the appropriate safeguarding training and keep your knowledge current through regular online

updates. You have put in place robust and thorough safeguarding procedures and ensure that all files are securely locked away. Records are detailed and of high quality. You and the chair of the governing body have completed safer recruitment training, and the single central record meets statutory requirements.

You provide staff with a safeguarding handbook at the beginning of the year or when they start at the school. You then top this up with additional face-to-face training to check that they fully understand the school's safeguarding policies. You have acted swiftly to ensure that the very latest government guidance has been passed on to staff. Staff have had training so that they can recognise how to protect pupils from the threat of radicalisation, extremism and female genital mutilation. As a result, staff all know what to do if they have any concerns. You deal with all referrals promptly and you are vigilant in pursuing any necessary further action with external agencies.

Parents who spoke with me said that they are reassured that staff do everything they can to keep their children safe. One parent commented, 'My children feel safe and happy which is by far the most important factor'. Pupils agree with this. They told me how they have total trust in their teachers. You have provided opportunities for them to learn about how to stay safe online, on their bikes and from strangers. Pupils told me how much they enjoy the regular visits from the local police community support officer and value being given good citizen awards. The school's bullying logs confirm that incidents of name-calling are extremely rare. School records evidence that there has been no homophobic or racist bullying at the school. Pupils respect and support each other. Posters around the school encourage pupils to be kind to each other by saying, for example, 'If you see someone without a smile give them one of yours'. Pupils told me that it is good to have different views and that the school has taught them 'to treat others how you want to be treated yourself'.

The school's safeguarding practices, including health and safety, are adapted well to the needs of the school's location within a Royal Air Force base.

Inspection findings

- You have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You recognise that further improvements are needed in relation to standards in reading at key stage 2, the progress of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, and the persistent absence of a very small minority of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The governing body provides you with appropriate support and challenge. Governors monitor the use of government funding for disadvantaged pupils closely. Like you, they recognise that it should be used more effectively to improve the attendance of those disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent from school.
- High-quality assessment underpins the school's work effectively and is used well to plan learning that is appropriate for most pupils from their starting points.

Each pupil has a pupil profile that leaders monitor closely to ensure that they are on track to make good progress. Pupils understand clearly what they are trying to learn and achieve. They routinely read through their work from each lesson to help them understand what they do well and what they need to do to improve. This approach to self-assessment starts in the early years.

- Teachers work with the local authority and other schools, moderating pupils' work to ensure that assessments are accurate.
- Teachers run a series of workshops for parents to help them support their children's learning at home. These have been well received by parents.
- Teaching assistants support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well in lessons and ensure that they make good progress from their starting points.
- You develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills well. For example, you encourage pupils to be eco-friendly. Each class has their own planting bed in the school garden where they grow their own produce to cook or sell to parents in the school shop. Pupils have responsibility for fruit bins in their classrooms so that they learn about recycling. Children in the early years have healthy eating mats that help them to understand and practise healthy eating habits from the earliest age.
- Leaders maintain a close focus on teaching and learning to reflect the school's commitment to continuous improvement. Teachers work in partnership with seven local schools to share good practice and training. You work with two teaching schools and you are on the strategic board of one.
- Governors ensure that the pupil premium funding for service children is used effectively. Each pupil is given a one-to-one assessment on arrival to ensure that learning is appropriately matched to their starting point. This helps ensure that they make good progress. New arrivals to the school are paired up with a buddy pupil to help them settle quickly. When pupils' families are being deployed, you support the pupils by making a moving book so that they learn about, and feel connected to, where they are going. You encourage them to keep in contact with friends at the school after their families are posted.
- Parents comment on how well the school communicates with them and report that you deal with any queries quickly and efficiently.
- The school has close links with the community. For example, pupils have worked with a local artist to make giant poppies for Remembrance Sunday. They intend to use these poppies to decorate the archway to the local church and place them on war graves during the Remembrance ceremony.
- The school has good connections with the local nursery and this enables pupils to make a smooth transition into Reception. Pupils who did not attend this nursery are well supported when they start at school through a series of home visits.
- The school's website does not meet statutory requirements for published information on the pupil premium and the physical education and sport funding.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' outcomes in reading at the end of key stage 2 improve
- more pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, reach the higher standards at the end of key stage 2
- persistent absenteeism is further reduced, including for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the school's website meets statutory requirements for published information on pupil premium and the physical education and sport funding.

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

Yours sincerely

Sally Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with parents at the start of the day. I met with you, and with the chair of the governing body. I spoke on the telephone to a representative from the local authority. I listened to pupils read and spoke with a group of pupils about their school experience. You and I visited all classes and examined pupils' workbooks. In addition, I scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the single central register (the school's record of safeguarding recruitment checks on staff). I evaluated the school's documentation in relation to pupils' performance, improvement planning, attendance, governing body meetings and monitoring records. I took account of 12 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, the 10 responses to the Ofsted free text service and seven responses to the staff survey. There were no responses from pupils to Ofsted's online survey.

This short inspection focused on:

- whether leaders are providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects in order to raise their attainment
- pupils' outcomes in reading, particularly for disadvantaged pupils
- the actions leaders are taking to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- the actions leaders are taking to reduce persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the effectiveness of safeguarding in ensuring pupils' safety.