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Ms Suzanne Whiting  
Headteacher  
Great Staughton Primary School  
The Causeway  
Great Staughton  
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PE19 5BP

Dear Ms Whiting

### **Short inspection of Great Staughton Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 September 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in September 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There has been a great deal of change over the last four years. The school opened as an academy in January 2014 and became part of the Diamond Learning Partnership Trust (the trust) a year later. Your predecessor left the school in September 2014 and you took up your post in January 2015.

To say that the good quality of education has been maintained does not reflect the improvements in outcomes that have taken place over the last couple of years, following a drop in standards in 2013 and 2014. These changes are a result of your strong leadership, combined with the good support and effective strategic leadership provided by the trust. It is clear that Great Staughton is once again a good school and that you have your sights firmly set on continued improvement.

During this inspection I explored a number of specific issues to check whether the school continues to be good. I checked whether the most able pupils make the good progress that they are capable of. I looked at the quality of the school's curriculum and whether pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects. I investigated how well the school communicates with parents and how effectively it deals with bullying. I concluded that you have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of all of these aspects of the school. There is still work to

be done to ensure that more pupils make rapid progress and to improve relations with a minority of parents who remain dissatisfied with the school. You know what needs to be done and the trust is supporting you well to do so.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding at Great Staughton is effective. The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are appropriate and that records are detailed and well kept. The school's updated safeguarding and child protection policy reflects the recent changes to the statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education', and all staff have been issued with a copy of part one of the guidance.

The trust has put good arrangements in place to ensure that safer recruitment processes are thorough and given a high priority. All recruitment is handled by the trust's central office and the trust's human resources manager is well aware of the need for systems to be efficient and processes thorough. Staff personnel records are well kept and maintained, and suitable checking systems are in place to ensure that all requirements are met. The school's single central record of recruitment checks meets statutory requirements.

As the designated safeguarding lead, you have been appropriately trained and have a strong understanding of how and when to take action to protect a child from suspected abuse or neglect. You have ensured that a second member of staff is suitably trained to carry out the role in partnership with you. Pupils feel safe at school because they have confidence that staff will help them if they ever have a problem.

### **Inspection findings**

- Pupils achieve well at Great Staughton. The proportion of Year 6 pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in this year's key stage 2 national tests was well above the national average. A third of pupils reached the higher standard in all three subjects.
- Some of the pupils who were higher attainers at the end of key stage 1 did not reach the same high standard at the end of key stage 2. However, there are very few pupils in each year group and data needs to be treated with caution. Work in pupils' exercise books shows clearly that the most able pupils do make good progress. A few pupils make more rapid progress, but not enough.
- Teachers know their pupils well and plan learning carefully to meet the varying levels of ability within each class. Teachers have a clear idea of what they want pupils to learn in lessons. Pupils enjoy their learning because they are provided with a range of interesting learning experiences such as the recent Tudor Day.
- Sometimes the tasks that pupils are given to do are not well matched with what the teacher wants pupils to learn. For example, in one class pupils were expected to practise using a very specific element of grammar but were given a task that encouraged them to practise their descriptive writing instead.

- The teaching of handwriting is not fully effective. Some pupils form letters incorrectly or orientate them wrongly (for example, letters are written backwards). This means that some pupils' work is untidy and difficult to read and some pupils struggle to develop a neat, efficient handwriting style.
- Phonics is generally taught well. The proportion of Year 1 pupils who reached the expected level of the phonics screening check was above the national average in 2016. Pupils show a love of reading and are keen and enthusiastic to talk about books. They use their phonics skills automatically as well as their prime strategy to decode (or work out) unfamiliar words. The subject knowledge of some members of staff is not as strong as it could be. For example, we observed staff using sounds incorrectly to spell words with pupils, such as erroneously identifying the sound 'a' (as in 'cat') in the word 'paper'.
- The school offers a broad and appropriately balanced curriculum and you are working hard to develop this further. For example, along with the other schools in the trust, you are developing the use of 'ICE zones' (intensive curriculum experiences) to deepen children's understanding and to encourage independence. You have found that the system is beginning to work well and you are keen to develop it further. Your assessment information shows that pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects. This good progress can be seen in the work in pupils' exercise books.
- The trust provides the opportunity for pupils to be taught by specialists in some subjects, such as music and art. The trust has recently appointed a specialist French teacher but it is too soon to see the impact of this on pupils' language skills.
- Responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, indicate that a minority of parents are dissatisfied with the school, although two thirds would recommend it to others. Some parents express concerns about issues such as provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. It is clear that you and the trust's leaders have tackled the areas that required prompt attention and that all areas of the school are improving. However, the improvements in the school have not been communicated effectively to parents through, for example, the school's website. The website does not contain all the information one would normally expect a school to provide and it is not used well to encourage good communication with all parents. The school uses social media effectively to communicate with those parents who choose to use it.
- Parent View results before the inspection suggested that parents have some concerns about how effectively the school deals with bullying. However, all available evidence indicates that bullying is dealt with effectively and there is no basis for concern. Pupils have been taught about bullying and they have great confidence that staff would be able to help them should a problem ever arise. The school's records show that behavioural incidents are investigated thoroughly and appropriate action is taken when necessary. Pupils say that there is no bullying at Great Staughton and the school's records confirm this.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- The quality of teaching continues to improve so that more pupils, particularly the most able pupils, make rapid progress by ensuring that:
  - tasks are always well matched to what teachers want pupils to learn and provide appropriate challenge for the most able
  - all staff have sufficiently strong subject knowledge about teaching phonics
  - handwriting is taught explicitly so that pupils form and orientate letters properly and develop an efficient handwriting style.
- Communication and relationships with parents are improved by ensuring that:
  - sufficient up-to-date information on the curriculum and other matters is provided on the school website
  - parents are provided with useful information, including about provision for pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive of the Diamond Learning Partnership Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Varney  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met with you and a number of other leaders, including the assistant headteacher, the chief executive officer of the trust, the chair of the governing body, the human resources manager and the special educational needs coordinator. I met with a group of key stage 2 pupils and spoke with other pupils during the day. We observed teaching and learning together in all three classrooms. I looked at the work in pupils' exercise books and scrutinised a range of school documents, including the single central record of checks to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children.

The inspection explored the following key lines of enquiry:

- Do the most able pupils make the good progress that they are capable of?
- What is the quality of the curriculum and do pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects?
- How effectively does the school communicate with parents?

- Does the school deal effectively with bullying?
- How effective and robust are safeguarding arrangements?