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8 December 2016

Ms Jennie Morris  
Acting Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Morris

### **Short inspection of Grainthorpe School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 November 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 October 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your arrival at the school in September 2016, you have led the school purposefully and have demonstrated determined leadership. You have clearly communicated the school's priorities and quickly built a united and confident team. The staff share your high expectations and you support them well to provide a good-quality education for all pupils.

Leaders create a nurturing and caring environment for the pupils. Pupils understand what is expected of them. They are mindful of the school's values, centring on knowledge, skills and managing feelings, and you provide frequent reminders in assemblies to reinforce the school's expectations. The pupils know that they must make the right choices to be successful and base their choices on respectful relationships. Pupils make good progress as a result of their positive relationships and attitudes to learning. For example, one child was rewarded for showing positive learning behaviours and expertly reflected on why he achieved the commendation.

Teachers have created bright and vibrant classrooms, which stimulate pupils' learning. You have established a culture of learning focused on teachers and pupils working together. Teachers have successfully developed pupils' ability to become learners who are able to think about how effectively they have learned from a particular activity. There is no doubt from looking at pupils' workbooks that they understand the purpose of self-review and their role in becoming reflective learners.

The school has effectively addressed the areas for improvement at the previous inspection. For example, you have developed opportunities for pupils to self-review and peer review their work during lessons. Teachers inform pupils of their progress through regular feedback.

Another area that has been developed is the range of activities to improve and challenge the children in the early years through inside and outside learning opportunities. Children have access to a range of activities that support them to explore and develop their knowledge and skills.

You have ensured that pupils have had opportunities to deepen their learning by involving them in enterprise activities and real-life problem-solving activities such as making bird feeders and reindeer food. Pupils told me that they enjoyed the opportunity to use and apply their English and mathematics skills.

Not all parents are encouraged to contribute information about their child's learning outside of school. You know that information shared by parents about their child's learning outside of school will support the development of the curriculum for early years children in your school. You see this as a vital development for children in the early years to make greater progress.

You are aware that some pupils do not have a good standard of presentation in their workbooks and that more opportunities to practise handwriting would support pupils to improve in this area.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality. The school's single central record, a record of safeguarding recruitment checks on staff and visitors, is kept in order and meets statutory requirements.

You have robust systems in place to monitor the welfare of pupils. You and your team are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures and ensure that outside agencies support the needs of pupils in your school. You respond promptly to concerns and ensure that there is early support in place for vulnerable pupils.

The governing body and all staff have received safeguarding training, as well as training to identify pupils who may be at risk from extremist views. Case files reviewed by the inspector showed that the school is responsive to any concerns raised and monitors pupils closely.

Risk assessments are in place for activities that take place in and out of school. There is a dedicated educational visits coordinator who successfully supports the school in the planning and safety procedures for all trips and visits. Pupils reported that they feel safe and value the visitors who come in to school to help them understand how to stay safe in a range of situations.

## Inspection findings

- You are an ambitious leader who has identified the strengths and weaknesses of your school accurately. You lead the school confidently and have wasted no time in implementing new procedures to improve teaching and learning. You have set up coaching and mentoring opportunities so that teachers are able to develop their skills and share their expertise. This ensures that there is consistency in the approach to teaching and learning across the school.
- The school is part of a wider federation where leadership is shared among two other local primary schools. This is a source of strength for the school as it draws upon the skills and expertise of other leaders across the federation.
- You use the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership to review the school's development priorities. You have found this to be a beneficial process.
- The governing body provides support to the federated schools. The governing body is ambitious and governors continually develop their skills, so that they can effectively support the federation's future.
- You have improved the quality of the teaching and learning in the early years through the appointment of an experienced class teacher. She adeptly provides rich learning opportunities for the children and recognises the importance of an exciting curriculum. Children enjoy playing in the outdoor area and have a range of play equipment such as sensory trays, musical instruments and role play areas. School information for 2016 shows that the school has achieved above the national average for the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development at the end of the early years. You want to improve this further by including parents' contributions about their child's learning outside of school.
- When we looked at books together, we noted that some pupils did not have a good standard of presentation. You commit to ensure that there are more opportunities for developing handwriting so that the overall standard of presentation improves.
- Pupils in key stage 1 have the opportunity to build on skills acquired in the early years through well-thought-out activities. For example, pupils were excited when they saw a film clip of a fireworks display. They were able to use adjectives to explain what they could hear and see.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in the school. Teaching assistants work with teachers to provide learning opportunities which help pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities develop their learning. For example, one pupil was able to practise fine motor skills through making a chocolate cake out of modelling clay.
- You have ensured that pupils have a broad and balanced curriculum, which develops their spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills and prepares them well for secondary school. Pupils enthusiastically told me about their residential trips and that they learned vital skills of determination and perseverance. Pupils have

a good understanding of British values and can explain how this links to their learning in school. Pupils told me that the information shared by visitors to the school about how to keep safe has been worthwhile.

- Classrooms are positive, colourful and purposeful places to be. Pupils enjoy their learning and the opportunities to talk with their classmates to reflect on how to improve their work. Pupils are rewarded for their positive learning behaviours and appreciate the collection of rewards.
- You have improved communication with parents. You have asked parents about the improvements they would like to see at the school and you have responded accordingly. Parents appreciate the improved communication and the positive relationships that you have with them.
- Phonics teaching is effective and this is reflected in the pupils' reading skills. Teachers provide fun activities so that pupils can practise their sounds and use them effectively in their reading activities. Outcomes for the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2016 were above the national average.
- Pupils enjoy reading and practise regularly. The most able pupils read confidently and can name their favourite authors. They read with expression and show good understanding of the text. Disadvantaged pupils read well and apply their phonics skills effectively. Younger pupils are able to use their phonics skills and blend sounds to make whole words. Low-attaining readers show perseverance with their reading and again use their phonics skills appropriately.
- Historically, pupils' assessment information shows that girls did not make as much progress as boys in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. You clearly explained the issues about the underperformance of girls in this small cohort and how this impacted on the girls' overall progress. Current pupils' books, particularly those of girls, show that they make good progress across the school.
- Year 5 and 6 pupils from a school within the federation receive the majority of their teaching and learning at your school. This enables your pupils to broaden their friendships and prepare themselves for their secondary school. You show dynamic leadership in prioritising the teaching and learning of the pupils across the federation which impacts on their progress and personal development.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- parents are encouraged to contribute information about their child's learning outside of school so that children can make greater progress in their learning
- there are more opportunities for pupils to practise their handwriting so that the presentation of work across the school improves.

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

Emma Nuttall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, who is also responsible for safeguarding, and subject leaders. I also had a meeting with the chair of the governing body. I visited a series of lessons with the headteacher. I examined samples of pupils' work and looked at teachers' assessments of that work. I spoke with pupils informally during lunchtime and lessons, and formally during an interview. I also listened to pupils read and looked at their reading records.

I observed pupils' behaviour around the school at the start of the day, at breaktimes and during lessons. I met with parents at the beginning of the school day and I took account of six responses to the Ofsted free text service. There were not enough responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, for these views to be considered. There were no responses to the staff or pupils' survey. I examined a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies, behaviour policies, the latest achievement information for the school, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, records of meetings of the governing body and information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour. I scrutinised safeguarding documents, including the single central record.

I considered the areas for improvement that were identified at the previous inspection in October 2011. These related to:

- increasing opportunities for pupils to assess, manage and improve their own work
- improving the range and challenge of activities that children select for themselves in the early years foundation stage, both indoors and outdoors
- deepening pupils' learning by involving them in enterprise activities and 'real-life' problem-solving situations.

Further, I assessed the school's safeguarding arrangements to ensure that they met statutory requirements and had a positive impact on the safety and welfare of the pupils at the school. I also assessed the quality of provision for children in the early years and the effectiveness of teaching and learning to ensure that girls make good progress by the end of key stage 2, particularly in reading and mathematics.