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Ms Rowena Hoare
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Hoare

Short inspection of Kings Nympton Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 January 2017, 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 July 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Kings Nympton Primary School is a nurturing school that empowers pupils to achieve. All parents who responded to the survey would recommend the school unreservedly. Parents typically describe the school as: 'A special and lovely school. Staff work well together to enrich the education of our children and to inspire them to be the best they can be.'

You model your high aspirations in words and deeds. Parents, pupils and staff hold you in high regard because of this. You have developed a staff team that shares your drive to enable pupils to become resilient learners. Pupils say that you motivate them to do their best. The high-quality work on display around the school signifies your high expectations. It celebrates pupils' considerable achievements and pupils tell me that it acts as inspiration for them to achieve their best. The artwork is of an exceptionally high quality. There is an industrious buzz in lessons. This is because teachers and other staff make learning engaging. Your principles ensure that pupils respect themselves, others, their work and the school.

Since the previous inspection, in 2013, the school joined the Two Moors Learning Partnership, a cooperative trust of five local schools. This has allowed the school to develop its strengths. For example, your procedures for checking the quality of the school's work are comprehensive and thorough. In addition, working in close partnership with other leaders has further strengthened the

accuracy of teachers' planning and assessment. Consequently, teachers give pupils clear guidance about how to improve.

Pupil mobility is a significant issue for your school. Approximately one third of the pupils in your school have joined after Year 2. This school has become a school of choice because of the support that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive. Pupils thrive emotionally and academically.

You have successfully addressed the areas raised at the previous inspection. You were asked to raise attainment in writing by embedding improvements in the school's action plan. Your action plans clearly demonstrate a relentless focus on writing and an improving picture for pupils' outcomes. Your whole-school approach to pupils' feedback is effective, particularly for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils' books show that they are making good progress with their writing. However, you readily accept that there is more to do.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff team take their responsibilities for safeguarding seriously. Adequate checks are in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

Staff know and understand what they should do if they have concerns about pupils. They follow up issues in a timely manner to ensure that no pupil comes to harm. You are assiduous in working with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the support they need.

Pupils report that they feel safe. They speak knowledgeably about how to keep safe, including with regard to road safety and the use of social media. Pupils I spoke to said they would readily talk to any member of staff if they had any worries.

Your actions to improve pupils' attendance have been successful. Overall attendance of pupils in Kings Nympton is now above the national average. However, for a small group of pupils attendance is stubbornly low. You recognise that there is more to do to ensure this improves and are continuing to take decisive action.

Inspection findings

- To establish that the school remained good, one of my key lines of enquiry was about writing. This was identified as an area for improvement in the previous inspection. The very small cohorts of children make it difficult to make year-on-year comparisons. However, national end of key stage tests reflect that pupils made less progress in writing than in mathematics and reading. In all current year groups, pupils show positive attitudes towards their writing and make good progress from their starting points. Pupils write regularly and for a range of purposes across the curriculum. You have carefully managed the transition to the higher expectations of the current English curriculum. Pupils' writing reflects the rich vocabulary they have gained through their reading. They use their well-honed skills of punctuation and grammar to good effect. However, some pupils in key stage 2 continue to

make spelling errors and this is preventing them from achieving the higher standards.

- My next line of enquiry focused on the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. Teachers know the pupils well and provide sufficient challenge and support. As a result, the most able pupils make good progress from their starting points to achieve a high standard, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The very few most able disadvantaged pupils achieve at least equally as well as other pupils. Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors are tenacious in ensuring that the additional funding is directed appropriately to support the individual needs of disadvantaged pupils. Governors provide regular challenge and carry out checks to ensure that funds are making a difference.
- A further line of enquiry focused on the teaching of phonics. This was because, previously, the proportions meeting the expected standard in phonics in Year 1 have been below the national average. Published information shows that pupils catch up in Year 2. I found the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in phonics to be effective. Pupils tackle unfamiliar words confidently. They write simple sentences accurately.
- My final line of enquiry focused on the effectiveness of leaders and governors in overseeing the quality of education and outcomes for children in the early years. This is because, historically, fewer children achieved a good level of development compared to those nationally. Children's learning records show that, historically, children enter the school with extremely weak mark-making and writing skills. By the end of the early years, although they make progress, some children's writing skills are less developed than their reading skills. Minutes of governor meetings clearly reflect governors' commitment to strengthen outcomes for children in the early years. Investment in the learning environment and additional staffing are supporting children's catch-up from their low starting points. Your new early years leader took up the post in September 2016. She has made links with the pre-school a priority. A shared outdoor area and joint training are paving the way for better sharing of information. Teachers have placed an increased emphasis on writing activities. Children need further guidance on letter formation. The foundations for improvement are in place but it is too soon to see the impact of these changes. You recognise that there is still more work to be done to help children to achieve better outcomes in writing.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of all groups of pupils is checked regularly and swift action is taken to ensure that pupils receive their entitlement to school
- the accuracy of pupils' spelling in key stage 2 is improved

- children's mark making and early writing skills in the early years are developed so that more children make good progress to achieve and exceed the early learning goal in writing by the end of Reception.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracy Hannon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke to you and your early years leader, pupils, and representatives of the governing body. I also had a telephone conversation with a local authority representative.

We made visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning. We also scrutinised the work in pupils' writing and topic books.

I considered a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, current progress information, minutes of the governing body meetings and pupil attendance information. I also considered staff employment files, safeguarding referrals and child protection records.

In addition, I took account of 10 responses to the Parent View online survey, one letter from a parent and five responses to the staff survey issued during the inspection.