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Dear Mr Sharp

Short inspection of Pierrepoint Gamston Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 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 June 2012.

This school continues to be good.

There have been considerable changes to the leadership team since the last inspection. You became the headteacher in September 2014, joined by a new assistant headteacher, and appointed a further assistant headteacher in February 2015. There have also been several changes to the teaching staff.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. School leaders have high aspirations for all pupils, a view that is shared by all staff and governors. Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and recognise the areas that are in need of further improvement. Governors are committed to the school and are passionate about their role in bringing about school improvement. The structure of the governing body maximises individuals' areas of expertise and members recognise where they would benefit from further training. These include, for example, their understanding of how to interpret pupil performance information in order to hold leaders to account closely. As headteacher, you have developed a model of distributed leadership. Middle leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities and understand what they need to do to bring about further improvement in the school. For example, the subject leader for English is developing plans to improve the quality of teaching of reading in all key stages across the school.

Staff feel valued. They appreciate the opportunities they have to develop their professional practice and consider that their contributions to school improvement

are recognised and worthy.

You promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. You have adapted the curriculum to provide opportunities for pupils to explore other cultures and to participate in a variety of experiences. During the course of the inspection, pupils in key stage 1 were taking part in music workshops where they were making their own musical instruments and using them in a performance of a song about different cultures. You have also ensured that pupils enjoy a wide range of sporting activities such as ice skating, basketball and hockey.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are happy, confident individuals who are keen to succeed. Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons and they recognise that their teachers want them to do well. They find it easy to ask for help and consider their teachers to be approachable and helpful.

Leaders have taken action to improve many of the areas identified at the last inspection. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to develop their independence and are able to maintain high levels of concentration for extended periods without adult direction. They are able to make decisions about their learning and what to do next to improve their work. There has been considerable work undertaken to improve the teaching of phonics in the early years setting and in key stage 1. Pupils' attainment in phonics has improved since the last inspection and continues to do so. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in phonics by the time they leave key stage 1 is now above the national average. The physical environment in the early years setting has been completely remodelled since the last inspection. Both the indoor and outdoor areas are rich learning spaces. They provide ample opportunities for children to develop their independence and make good progress in their learning. Leaders have also ensured an appropriate balance between teacher-led and child-led activity in the early years.

The last inspection identified the use of teachers' questioning as an area for further improvement. You recognise that more work needs to be done to develop the quality of teachers' questioning to probe and draw out pupils' understanding. In the lessons we observed, teachers were too quick to move on and did not allow pupils enough opportunities to reflect and consider their responses, which prevented pupils from developing their reasoning skills.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that safeguarding processes are effective. Systems are simple and clear and all staff understand their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety of all pupils. Records are appropriately detailed and well maintained. All staff have received up-to-date training and are aware of current risks to young people. As headteacher, you take the ultimate responsibility but have also ensured that other staff are able to act in your absence, should it be required.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They have a good understanding of diversity and are respectful of others' views and values. Pupils report that incidents

of bullying are extremely rare but are confident that staff would act swiftly should any occur.

Inspection findings

- One of the inspection focuses was to look at the action leaders have taken to increase rates of progress in reading.
- Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of key stage 2 is above the national average. However, pupils enter the key stage working at levels that exceed those nationally. In 2016, pupils' progress in reading was below the national average and weaker than their progress in writing and mathematics.
- Leaders introduced a new guided reading strategy in September 2016. All pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are now assessed according to their reading age and pupils' independent reading books are matched to these levels.
- Leaders recognise that the organisation and planning of guided reading sessions need further development to ensure that sessions are consistently good and lead to good progress for all pupils. During the course of the inspection, you and I observed two guided reading sessions and noted that, where pupils are working directly with a teacher, they are able to make progress. However, too many pupils were left without direction or working on tasks that lacked challenge. As a result, learning time was wasted, which limited progress for many pupils. Evidence in pupils' books shows that this often happens.
- Pupils are self-motivated and concentrate on their work well. Work in pupils' books is neatly presented and reflects the pride that pupils take in their learning.
- Teachers do not consistently plan activities that are matched to pupils' abilities. There is a lack of challenge, particularly for the most able pupils. Several pupils said that they found some of their work too easy and many pupils were observed working on activities that did not challenge them and had little educational value.
- Another focus of the inspection was to look at the provision and outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. The special educational needs coordinator provides clear leadership to all staff and shares high expectations of pupils' personal development. Leaders ensure that processes to identify pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are robust and involve a wide range of professionals. Staff have a very good level of understanding of individual pupils' needs and there are clear strategies in place to support them. Leaders set individual targets and purposefully track pupils' progress against these. There is an emphasis on pupils' holistic development, particularly their social and emotional development. Leaders are aware of the need to track pupils' academic progress in greater detail to ensure that academic intervention is quickly applied where necessary. Nevertheless, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress across all key stages.
- A third focus was to look at the provision and outcomes for disadvantaged

pupils.

- Leaders have taken effective action to support disadvantaged pupils to improve their attendance. They have identified barriers to individuals' attendance and taken steps to support pupils in overcoming these. The importance of regular attendance is highlighted in assemblies and celebrated through rewards. Pupils understand the impact that regular attendance has on their progress. In 2016, disadvantaged pupils' attendance was significantly below the national average but this has improved since September 2016 and current attendance for all pupils is now above the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching improves so that:
 - work is consistently matched to pupils' abilities, particularly to ensure that the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged
 - teachers' use of questioning allows pupils the opportunity to develop their reasoning skills
- progress in reading improves by:
 - ensuring that all pupils are sufficiently challenged
 - activities are purposeful.

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

Yours sincerely

Deborah Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I held meetings with pupils, staff and governors. I also spoke to the director of education from the diocese by telephone. I spoke informally to pupils at lunchtime and in their lessons and to parents as they were dropping their children off at school. I visited all classes with the headteacher and observed pupils' learning. I looked at pupils' work in a sample of their books in a variety of subjects and year groups. I considered the 115 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, the 123 free text responses from parents, additional communications received from parents and the 18 responses from staff. I scrutinised a range of school

documents, including records relating to safeguarding and behaviour and school policies. I also looked at information published on the school website.