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Mrs Louise McGeachie
Mrs Kim Kirchin
Headteachers
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Dear Mrs McGeachie and Mrs Kirchin

Short inspection of Studfall Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You have created an inclusive, supportive and nurturing environment where every pupil is valued. Pupils are kind, considerate and respectful of diversity. Teachers and staff support pupils' needs very well because they take the time to understand their specific needs. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are given extra support by well-trained staff who have positive relationships with them.

Pupils behave well in lessons. You have created a purposeful environment where pupils are able to develop their confidence and build on their self-esteem. Pupils spoke positively about the 'sports crew' and how this has improved sports activities in the school. They also said that sporting activities are important so that pupils are able to understand the importance of determination, self-belief and respect.

Since the last inspection, leaders have ensured that teachers extend pupils' thinking and set more challenging tasks. This is particularly evident in mathematics lessons where pupils are set challenges so that they have opportunities to deepen their understanding. You and the mathematics leader have also ensured that there is better provision of practical resources to develop pupils' understanding of new mathematical ideas. In mathematics lessons, pupils have opportunities to test out their ideas and apply their knowledge using a range of resources. For example, in

one lesson, pupils were using different containers to estimate capacity as well as to convert measures. You acknowledge that the proportion of pupils achieving a greater depth in mathematics is not yet in line with national expectations.

Leaders have organised opportunities for teachers to share their expertise in school and hence increase the proportion of outstanding teaching. Teachers observe lessons and receive training to improve their practice. In addition, teachers in the infant and junior schools jointly check on pupils' assessments to ensure that they are accurate before pupils transfer to the junior school. Consequently, links between the infant and junior schools have been developed to ensure that pupils have a smooth transition in their learning between key stages 1 and 2.

You acknowledge that there is further work to be done to ensure that the school's recent work on developing the mathematics curriculum is extended further. You note that there needs to be greater consistency on the teaching of problem-solving and reasoning skills so that pupils deepen their understanding.

You have recognised the need for pupils to develop their reading and writing skills. You and the teachers have recently developed the English curriculum so that class learning stems from a class novel. You know that this has increased pupil engagement and improved the quality of writing in the school. During the inspection, I listened to pupils read and found that not all pupils are having enough opportunities to practise their reading skills in school. Consequently, not all pupils are as fluent with their reading skills as they could be and need support to develop their comprehension skills further. You acknowledge that more time is needed for this new approach to impact on pupils' achievements in reading.

You also acknowledged that work in pupils' workbooks is not always presented to the highest standard. Consequently, pupils do not organise their work as well as they could so that they avoid making unnecessary errors in their work.

Safeguarding is effective.

The headteachers and staff have good partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies. This has helped to ensure that pupils are supported and kept safe. Safeguarding training for staff and governors is up to date and governors make thorough checks on all safeguarding practices. The governing body carry out regular safeguarding audits. Staff know precisely what to do in the event of a safeguarding concern and have all of the information and guidance they need to provide excellent support for pupils in their care.

High-quality detailed records show that you manage concerns swiftly and understand the procedures for referring pupils where there is a concern. You are prompt and vigilant in garnering further support by approaching the appropriate external agency. Regular meetings take place to review the needs of pupils to ensure that they continue to receive appropriate support from the school and external agencies.

The needs of pupils in the designated specialist provision are also reviewed regularly and staff are highly trained to meet their specific learning and medical needs.

Pupils feel safe at the school and are confident that their concerns are quickly dealt with by staff. They know precisely how the school keeps them safe. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and they enjoy the e-safety weeks that serve as important reminders. Visitors, such as the police, also visit the school to remind pupils about how to keep themselves safe in the community. Pupils say bullying is rare and teachers deal with any friendship disagreements promptly.

Inspection findings

- You and your team have established a rigorous and robust system to undertake assessments of pupils' attainment on entry to the school, so that pupils' progress and achievement can be assessed from their starting points. The school's assessment information and pupils' workbooks show that pupils are making good progress across the curriculum.
- Teachers plan mathematics activities carefully to reinforce and extend pupils' learning. Teachers ensure that there is enough challenge in place so that pupils, particularly high-attaining girls, are able to make good progress.
- The mathematics leader has delivered training to teachers to ensure that they know how to plan activities and use mathematics resources effectively to meet the needs of the pupils. She monitors teaching and learning closely and provides timely feedback to teachers so that they know how to improve their practice. Consequently, pupils' workbooks show that they make continued good progress, particularly high-attaining girls.
- Your leadership team has ensured that the additional funding for pupil premium pupils has been used effectively. Disadvantaged pupils receive effective support across the curriculum with an additional teacher providing individual and small-group support. More recently, an extra mathematics ability set has been put in place. Pupils' workbooks show that they are making good progress in lessons because teachers are planning and providing well-designed activities.
- You have addressed the issues regarding the poor attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals. You are able to account for the pupils who had weaker attendance. You carefully monitor pupils' attendance and ensure that parents and carers are regularly informed about their child's attendance. You meet with families where there are concerns and put appropriate actions in place. The school is currently meeting the national average for overall attendance. The attendance for pupils who are eligible for free school meals is also improving.
- You and your team provide effective provision for those pupils who require emotional support. You have learning mentors in place who focus on developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils spoke positively about this provision and felt reassured that they are supported. Consequently, pupils show good behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons.
- The support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in

the designated specialist provision is good. Pupils receive an inclusive, broad and rich curriculum. For example, pupils enjoyed working with local secondary pupils as part of science week and learning how science is in the world around us.

- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for lower-attaining pupils. They take the time to understand their specific needs and support their learning through careful questioning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills, so that a greater proportion of pupils achieve greater depth in mathematics
- pupils read regularly so that they develop greater fluency and comprehension skills
- pupils' presentation is of high standard.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. 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 joint headteachers of the infant and junior schools, the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and other governors. I visited a number of lessons, examined samples of pupils' work and talked with pupils about their work. I spoke with pupils, informally, during breaktime and lessons, and more formally in a group.

I observed pupils' behaviour around the school at breaktimes and during lessons. I met with parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of the 19 responses to the Ofsted's free-text service and the 30 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's staff survey or pupil survey. I examined a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies, behaviour policies, the latest published and internal information about pupils' attainment and progress, the school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plan, records of meetings of the governing body and information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.