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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Angie Waplinton
Headteacher
Hemswell Cliff Primary School
Capper Avenue
Hemswell Cliff
Gainsborough
Lincolnshire
DN21 5XS

Dear Mrs Waplinton

Short inspection of Hemswell Cliff Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school's values-driven approach gives it a strong ethos. It has a very positive impact on the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. The school is calm and orderly, the pupils learn well and are manifestly happy there.

You have dealt systematically with the areas for improvement from the last inspection. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has increased year on year at a faster rate than the national average. All of the pupils reach the expected standard by the end of Year 2. The pupils make similar progress now in writing as they do in reading.

The pupils' achievement in mathematics fell noticeably below the expected levels in 2016. This was unusual. You and the staff reacted promptly to the surprising news, identified the problems clearly, and have made changes rapidly to the way in which mathematics is taught. The impact of the changes is evident in the pupils' work. The pupils are now working much more on problem solving and mathematical reasoning, the two aspects with which they struggled so much in 2016, and are currently making reasonable progress.

The pupils' writing is developed systematically throughout the school. The teachers use a carefully planned approach that results in steady and incremental gains in the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

The teachers help the pupils to link together their learning in phonics, in reading and in writing. That helps the pupils to write increasingly lengthy, detailed and complex texts.

The school's work to teach reading begins well in the early years. The pupils approach reading with confidence. They use their knowledge of phonics effectively to help them to read, including the pupils who find reading difficult. They become increasingly fluent and, by the end of Year 2, the most able begin to read with appropriate intonation and expression.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of good quality. The school pays considerable attention to the pupils' frequently very high levels of need. The school's work is a significant contributor to the high levels of confidence in the school expressed by parents to me and in the pupils stating unequivocally that they feel safe at the school.

Newly arrived pupils settle into the school quickly. The school experiences a very high level of change in the pupil population, with many pupils joining the school and leaving it at unusual times, part-way through key stages and part-way through academic years. Typically, these are disadvantaged pupils who also have very significant social and educational needs. The school takes care to assist the pupils who leave the school to move to their next school and to establish the whereabouts of the pupils.

The pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe in a range of ways. Bullying is rare.

Inspection findings

- The pupils concentrate well in lessons and apply themselves to their work. Their pride in what they do is increasingly evident in the presentation of their work the longer that they are with the school.
- The pupils who are with the school for relatively short periods of time make reasonable gains in their learning during that time. This is not always reflected in their test results, either because they have been at the school relatively briefly, or they have left.
- The pupils acquire a good understanding of the technical aspects of writing. They are able to use the correct terms to describe the parts of grammar about which they are learning. They still make some mistakes in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- The teachers get the pupils interested in writing through a range of well-conceived methods. The methods include deliberately chosen topics, some of which challenge stereotypical thinking, for example about disability, and getting

the pupils to write from first-hand experiences. A competitive element is proving particularly successful with boys.

- The lesser able readers to whom I listened struggled to use their phonics knowledge effectively when faced with particularly challenging words. They could identify some of the sounds accurately, but struggled to put them together to make the words.
- The work to rectify the issues with the pupils' achievement in mathematics, though evidently bringing improvements, is recent and has not been sustained long enough to have an impact on the end-of-year tests.
- The teachers are increasingly taking opportunities to improve the pupils' mathematical reasoning and their writing skills simultaneously, by getting the pupils to explain their reasoning in writing. This is helping to improve the pupils' understanding of both subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the improvements in the teaching of mathematics are sustained and the currently improved pupils' progress in the subject is secured.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with: you and other senior leaders; the designated leader for safeguarding and the learning mentor; the early years leader and the mathematics coordinator. I met with representatives of the governing body. I made a series of visits to lessons, jointly with you. I discussed the work of the school with the pupils formally, in a group, and informally during breaktimes and in lessons. I looked at examples of the pupils' work during lessons and at a sample of their workbooks. I listened to a group of pupils reading. I looked at the views of parents expressed using Parent View, spoke with others at the start of the school day and looked at the results of parental surveys carried out by the school. I scrutinised various documents, including safeguarding records, a range of policy documents, and the school's information about the current progress of the pupils and their attendance.