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Dear Mr Walter

Short inspection of Sir Francis Hill Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 June 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. You promote a strong, caring culture where pupils feel safe and are well looked after. Pupils enjoy coming to school and parents speak highly of the 'hard working teachers who genuinely care about the children they teach'.

School leaders have created a positive climate for learning. As a result, pupils are respectful and relationships between pupils and their teachers are good. Pupils are confident and enthusiastic learners. They particularly appreciate learning through topics that excite and motivate them. For example, pupils I spoke to told me about their current 'Harry Potter' themed topic where they were writing and acting out new scenes based on the books. Other children told me how they had enjoyed their topic about 'rainforests' where they carried out several outdoor investigations. One pupil explained, 'I love the workshops and trips that "hook" us into a topic. It makes it special.'

The school has undergone significant structural changes over the last year as it prepares to expand to meet the needs of the growing community. This has enabled you to further develop provision for children in the early years. Nursery and Reception year children benefit from motivating outdoor learning environments and large indoor spaces that are rich with learning opportunities.

You ensure that children have the best possible start to school life. The proportion

of children who leave early years with a good level of development is continuing to improve and is above that of other pupils nationally. The introduction of a new approach to the teaching of phonics has been successful in further raising attainment in reading and writing so that children are well prepared for Year 1.

You and your team have dealt effectively with the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You successfully raised attainment in writing through various changes to the curriculum and focused staff training. Standards in writing improved significantly. Strong links are now established beyond your local community so that pupils get regular opportunities to consolidate their understanding of other faiths and cultures. You rightly changed the curriculum to ensure that pupils are explicitly taught about different faiths and cultures. You have taught them to understand the importance of respecting others and of valuing diversity. As a result, pupils are thoughtful, reflective and communicate well. Pupils I spoke with told me that the school is a place where, 'We look after each other because, inside, everybody is the same.'

Members of the governing body provide school leaders with effective support and challenge. They have a variety of suitable skills and expertise. They are knowledgeable and regularly monitor the actions taken by leaders to secure improvements. Governors have a particular focus on disadvantaged pupils. They ensure that the additional funding for these pupils is used effectively, but realise this can be improved to ensure better outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding is effective

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed. You make sure that the safeguarding of pupils is effective and a high priority. The necessary checks are made prior to any adult being employed by the school or allowed to have unsupervised contact with pupils. Staff and governors receive the appropriate training. You and your staff are alert to the things that make pupils vulnerable. Staff are vigilant and records show that you take decisive and prompt action when it is needed to secure pupils' well-being.

Pupils are self-assured and happy in school. Pupils I spoke to said that they felt safe in school. They told me that bullying is rare, but when it does happen staff deal with it quickly. They feel well cared for by staff in school. Pupils know how to use the internet safely and could explain to me how they can keep safe, especially in relation to road safety and danger from strangers.

Inspection findings

- School leaders and governors know the school's strengths well and areas in which it can improve. This information is used to drive the school forward. You and other senior leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and provision is put in place to support the professional development of staff.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards at the end of key stage 2 in writing and mathematics was above the national averages. You rightly

identified that the below-average attainment of these pupils in reading was due to a lack of specific teaching in reading comprehension skills. You took prompt action to address this through changes to the curriculum and improved teaching strategies. Current performance information indicates significant improvements in the proportion of pupils working at the expected standard. Leaders addressed the lower than national average attainment in reading in key stage 1 by reviewing and improving the teaching of phonics. Although this has been slow to develop in Year 1, you and your English leaders feel that initial problems have been overcome. Current information shows that pupils in Year 2 have made improved progress in reading this year. You are optimistic for improved future outcomes as strategies are firmly embedded.

- Leaders were disappointed with the end of key stage 1 results in 2016. You identified that this was due to previous weak teaching in early years. Good teaching in Year 1 and Year 2 enabled these pupils to make good progress but this was not demonstrated in the published outcomes. Scrutiny of these pupils' work in Year 3 shows that they are now catching up well. Staff changes in Year 1 and the introduction of new approaches to teaching have enabled pupils to make better progress this year.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils declined in 2016. You use the pupil premium funding and funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to enable these pupils to make good progress from their starting points. For example, extra time and intervention is given to these pupils for literacy and numeracy when needed. Nevertheless, you acknowledge that not enough of these pupils attain the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders, including governors, realise that their analysis of the impact of additional funding is not precise enough to ensure that it is having the maximum effect on outcomes for pupils.
- You and your staff recognised the need to create a curriculum to better meet the needs of all learners, particularly disadvantaged pupils. You aimed to increase pupils' motivation and raise standards. For example, topics are specifically designed to interest children so that they are excited to learn. Scrutiny of pupils' books showed that more-able pupils are challenged to extend their thinking and specific teaching of mathematics and English skills is promoting good progress. Pupils of different abilities and in different year groups produce a good standard of work across the curriculum. However, you agreed that the monitoring of standards in subjects other than English and mathematics needs to be more precise so that high expectations are consistent across all subjects.
- Attendance in 2016 was below the national average overall and persistent absence was high for specific groups of pupils. Current attendance figures for these pupils are improving, but attendance remains below the national average figures. Leaders have recognised that the target of eradicating persistent absence and sustaining the improvements in overall attendance remains a priority.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the impact of additional pupil premium funding is more precisely analysed
- actions to eradicate persistent absence and improve overall attendance are sustained and, where possible, developed to make them even more effective
- pupils' progress in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics is carefully monitored to ensure consistently high standards.

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

Stephanie Innes-Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and special educational needs coordinator, your assistant headteachers, the leaders of English and mathematics and pupil premium. I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and I met with a group of pupils. I also met with members of the governing body.

We visited classrooms together and I looked at a range of pupils' work. We discussed the progress of different groups of pupils and the school's plans for improvement. I considered the responses of parents from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, the responses from pupils from Ofsted's online survey and the responses of staff from Ofsted's online survey for members of staff. I scrutinised evidence from a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance, information regarding procedures for safeguarding and monitoring of behaviour, information on how the pupil premium is spent, analysis of attendance and a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding and behaviour. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and out on the playground and in the lunch hall. I checked the school's single central register to ensure that it met current safeguarding regulations.