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Mrs Deborah Challinor
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Dear Mrs Challinor

Short inspection of The Potterhanworth Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 September 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 October 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 have an accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to improve it further. This is because you evaluate closely the impact of any improvements you make. You analyse the progress pupils make and consider carefully what needs to be done to ensure that pupils make even better progress.

You place great importance on the welfare of pupils and staff alike. Pupils say that they are safe in school; every parent who responded to the online survey agreed that their children are looked after well. Several staff took time to explain to me that you consider their well-being and work-life balance.

Governors care deeply about the school and are very proud of the pupils who attend. They ask challenging questions of you and your leadership team. They are aware of their statutory responsibilities and undertake training to help them to fulfil their roles. Several governors come into school to check different aspects of the work of the school for themselves. They receive reports from leaders, and sometimes pupils, about provision, to help them gain a full understanding of the impact of initiatives that you have implemented, such as improving opportunities for pupils to voice their opinions. Governors are determined that pupils will not only achieve well in their academic work, but will also have a wide range of experiences to provide them with a rounded education.

The leadership team and governors ensure that pupils in this small village school have a raft of different opportunities available to them. This is a particular strength of the school. There is an allotment for pupils to tend. They can compete in sporting events, learn to play musical instruments and take part in productions for their families to attend. Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs on offer, such as football, gardening, drama and choir. Over recent years, several pupils have been nominated to receive awards in the 'Lincolnshire Education Awards', including for literacy and for contribution to school life and to sport. Older pupils recognise that the responsibilities they are encouraged to take, such as helping at lunchtime, being a library monitor or a 'buddy' for a younger pupil, are helping them to be prepared for life beyond primary school. Pupils take part in productions at the Lincolnshire music and drama festival and locally in the village.

There have been recent changes to the leadership team. This is due to a small turnover of staff and some staff returning from maternity leave. Some leaders are new to post. You have ensured that they are receiving support from more experienced members of staff to develop their leadership skills. There is still work to do in order for all these leaders to be able to improve the quality of provision and outcomes in their subjects.

Since the last inspection, you have provided teachers with a 'monitoring entitlement'. You view this as their personal entitlement to professional development. Teachers value this process. During the year, teachers know when you will monitor the quality of their teaching. They receive useful feedback to help them improve. If you see any common areas for improvement, these are shared with all staff so they can all benefit. This has helped you to bring about improvements to the quality of teaching, as you were asked to do at the previous inspection. You were also asked to improve the progress that pupils make in mathematics. You have ensured that teachers have received important training so that they have the skills to teach to the higher expectations of the new national curriculum. You introduced short 'basic skills' mathematics sessions for pupils. Teachers use their assessments of pupils' learning to ensure that these sessions are matched well to the needs of the pupils. Unconfirmed school-assessment information for 2017 and published data for 2016 show that the progress pupils are making in mathematics has improved since the last inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that arrangements for safeguarding are fit for purpose and records are well kept.

You ensure that all the necessary vetting checks take place when a new member of staff or volunteer starts working at the school. Staff and governors have received the appropriate training so that they know how to raise a concern about a child's welfare, should one arise. You keep staff informed of any relevant safeguarding updates throughout the school year.

Pupils say that they are taught how to keep themselves safe. They told me that they learn about many different aspects of safety, such as fire or water safety and how to cycle safely on the road. Teachers make sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe when they use the internet. Pupils know how to report anything to an adult that might be inappropriate when they use modern technology in or out of school. Pupils say that bullying does not really happen at Potterhanworth, but if it did, staff would take it very seriously.

Inspection findings

- In 2016, you identified that pupils had not made as much progress in reading as they did in other subjects. The leader with responsibility for English implemented a new strategy for teaching reading across the school. As we toured the school together, we saw that teachers were developing pupils' vocabulary and other reading skills effectively. Pupils were engaged in their learning. The new approach to teaching reading has proved to be successful. Unconfirmed assessment information for 2017 shows that there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils achieving the higher levels of attainment in both key stages 1 and 2 in reading.
- You analyse very carefully the progress all pupils are making during the year. You offer additional support where this may be required. We looked particularly closely at the progress pupils make during their time in key stage 1. Pupils' books from this key stage showed that they had made progress in a range of subjects. You have identified the pupils who did not achieve the standards you hoped. You have analysed the reasons for this and you are providing additional support for these pupils. School-assessment information for last year shows that across the school most pupils made the progress you expected of them, including those pupils who are disadvantaged, from their starting points.
- This incisive analysis of pupils' progress over recent months has helped you to identify that there is also scope to increase the proportion of pupils, particularly those who are the most able, achieving the higher standard in mathematics, spelling, punctuation and grammar across the school. This is a particular focus for development over the coming year.
- Levels of attendance are above the national average overall. When it is necessary, school leaders work innovatively with parents whose children do not attend school regularly enough to improve the situation.
- Around the school and in lessons, pupils are polite and show their good manners when interacting with adults and their peers. Pupils learn about democracy and respect through the school's own values. They talk maturely about people whose beliefs or lifestyles may be different from their own. Pupils enjoy their learning. They were keen to tell me that teachers make sure that learning is interesting for them.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they fully develop the skills of subject leaders so that these leaders can improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils in their areas of responsibility
- pupils who are capable of reaching the higher levels of attainment in mathematics, spelling, punctuation and grammar are enabled to do so by teachers:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills in problem-solving situations
 - insisting that pupils consistently use the skills they have learned in spelling, punctuation and grammar when they write.

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

Yours sincerely

Di Mullan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, four subject leaders, two members of your administration staff team and four other staff. I also met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school and I spoke with a group of eight pupils. I held a telephone conversation with a representative from Warren Wood Academy because one pupil spends part of the school week there. I also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

You and I toured the school together to see the learning that was taking place in every classroom. We looked at a sample of pupils' books from the last academic year. I scrutinised the school's single central record and we discussed the school's safeguarding arrangements. I examined a range of documentation, including minutes of the governing body meetings, reports from external monitoring of the school's provision and documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils. I reviewed the development plans for this year and last year and your own evaluation of the work of the school. There were no responses from pupils to the online survey to take into consideration. I considered the 14 responses from the staff survey and the 21 responses from the online survey, Parent View.