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Andrew Smith
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Dear Mr Smith

Short inspection of Nettleton Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 October 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team and the governing body have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have secured a strong ethos and sense of values. The pupils 'soak up' the values, which results in a very calm and orderly school. The pupils are polite, confident and well behaved.

The pupils place great value on the friendliness of everyone in the school. Those with whom I spoke told me unequivocally that there is no bullying at the school. They said that the pupils do not use racist or homophobic language towards each other. They know, because they have been taught, how to deal with bullying, should it occur. They take responsibility themselves for dealing with any problems. They told me, for example, that sometimes there is bickering between pupils, but they help each other to sort it out.

You have worked systematically and effectively to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This has been particularly successful in writing. You have introduced a carefully chosen, coordinated and coherent whole-school approach to teaching writing. The pupils get good opportunities to use and to improve their writing in a range of subjects. You have backed up that approach with rigorous checks to make sure that the teachers assess the pupils' work accurately. The teachers have been less effective in identifying what is needed to help the pupils to achieve greater depth in their learning. This applies particularly, but not solely, to the most able.

The teachers put considerable emphasis on working with the pupils to identify and to correct errors. They focus, particularly, on grammar, spelling and punctuation. This was something that the school was asked to work on after the previous inspection. The improvements that you and the staff have made have led to the pupils acquiring knowledge and skills securely.

The staff's detailed knowledge of each pupil and the carefully planned and successful work to meet individuals' needs are the cornerstones of the school's improvement since the last inspection. Nowhere is that more evident than in the way that the substantial proportion of pupils who join the school part way through their education settle in very quickly.

The teachers assess the pupils promptly when they join the school to determine exactly what support they need. Many of the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as other needs. The assessments show that these pupils are often some way behind the other pupils at the school in terms of their knowledge and skills. They make good progress at Nettleton but are not always with the school for very long. This means that not all of them catch up by the time that they finish Year 6.

Your thorough approach to analysing how well the pupils are doing and to checking on the effectiveness of the teaching has helped you to recognise that the pupils have not been given enough opportunities to develop and to demonstrate their mathematical reasoning skills. Consequently, the pupils have not learned as well in mathematics as in writing. I saw clear evidence that the pupils are now getting more opportunities to improve their reasoning skills, but they have not been doing so for long.

The school's reputation among parents has improved substantially since the last inspection. The number of pupils on roll has increased by about half as a result of parents requesting places. That popularity is apparent in the very high level of satisfaction expressed by the 39 parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online inspection survey. This is a large proportion for a school of only 76 pupils. The parents' satisfaction is reflected also in comments written by parents in response to the school's surveys.

Safeguarding is effective.

Every pupil with whom I spoke told me that they feel safe in school. They referred to the coded locks on the doors and fire practices as some of the things that helped them to feel safe. They know to look out for the official badges that visitors are required to wear and are not afraid to ask who a visitor is, if they cannot see a badge.

The staff complete detailed assessments of the risks connected with school activities, such as visits to services at the local church. The visits involve crossing a busy main road, but the pupils are taught about the possible dangers. The pupils

wear high-visibility clothing and know how to behave themselves. Members of staff have received compliments from the public about the way that the pupils conduct themselves when walking to the church.

The staff are alert to things that could be a cause for concern about a pupil. You and the governing body ensure that the staff are trained regularly in a range of safeguarding matters. You keep the staff up to date with national concerns and developments. The school has a straightforward approach to reporting concerns. You hold frequent discussions with the staff, which help the school to respond quickly to any needs. You are diligent in following up any concerns, particularly those that require contact with other agencies. You are very persistent in seeing things through to make sure that any pupil who needs it is getting as much help as possible.

Inspection findings

- Your astute leadership, focused both on safeguarding and improving the outcomes for the pupils, means that you are fully alert to aspects of the school that should be improved. As a result, the things that I have identified as the next steps for the school are already in the school's draft development plan. The plan is ready to go before the governing body shortly.
- The staff check regularly on how well pupils are learning. You have established a regular and frequent routine for reviewing the results of the checks. You and the staff use the information that you glean well to plan the next steps in the pupils' learning, according to the needs that you have identified.
- The pupils become increasingly self-reliant. They help each other in lessons and will use the 'working walls' when they are stuck before they ask a teacher. They know that they can get extra help, if they need it. They told me about how additional groups working on phonics or mathematics had helped them to improve their work.
- One parent wrote about the school, '(My child) has blossomed at this school and (Nettleton) is the first school (my child) has loved and wanted to go to every day.' This opinion echoed many other comments collected by the school. It illustrates very well the school's success in providing for individual pupils' needs, including the large proportion of pupils who join the school later than others.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the pupils get good opportunities to develop and to use their mathematical reasoning skills
- the staff improve their skills and knowledge so that they can help the pupils achieve greater depth in their learning of reading, writing and mathematics.

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 staff and the designated leader for safeguarding. I met with members 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 lessons and at breaktime. I looked at examples of the pupils' work during lessons and reviewed examples of their workbooks. I looked at the views of parents expressed using Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and at the results of surveys carried out by the school. I looked at the results of the inspection survey completed by the staff. I scrutinised various documents, including safeguarding records, a range of policy documents, the school's information about the current progress of the pupils, the latest attendance figures for the school, and your records of checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.