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Miss Michaela Eden  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Eden

### **Short inspection of Dunnington CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 November 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 March 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

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

Since your appointment in September 2016, you have worked with vigour and determination to secure a high quality of education for your pupils. Staff, pupils and governors all commented on your strong commitment to do the very best for your pupils. You, your leadership team and governors have high aspirations for your pupils and you are self-challenging and relentless in that mission.

Leaders, staff and governors place a clear emphasis on nurturing pupils' wider personal development as well as their academic well-being. The school motto, 'The Dunnington family working together to achieve our best', reflects this and is underpinned by the school's four cornerstones: 'Love God, work hard, care for each other and have good manners and behaviour'. A member of staff said that 'The ethos of the Dunnington family is close to everyone's heart and influences every decision made about each child.' As a result, pupils feel valued as individuals. They behave exceptionally well in school, both in lessons and during less structured times. They are articulate, confident and polite to visitors. They demonstrate courtesy and respect to each other and all members of staff. They are interested in their learning and work diligently to present their work carefully and neatly. They are extremely proud of their school and rightly so.

Your clear and accurate understanding of the school's areas for development enables you to focus on the right things. The school's development plan identifies the most important priorities, and strategies have been put in place to address these. In particular, you are focused on strengthening teaching further in order to lift standards higher in mathematics and improve aspects of early years provision. This is because opportunities to develop basic skills in English, mathematics and other areas of the curriculum in outdoor spaces, in the early years, are being lost. There are too few resources or activities to interest or motivate children to explore, discover and develop their learning outside.

You and your team have taken action to address some of the areas for improvement from the last inspection. There has been a significant improvement to assessment processes across the school. Assessment is now more robust, so pupils' progress is more tightly tracked. This has enabled pupils who require support with their learning and previously have made slow progress to be identified more rapidly. Gaps in their knowledge and understanding are picked up and then effectively addressed. Strategies to pick up misconceptions in a timely way are also ensuring stronger progress for all pupils in all classes.

The previous inspection stated that teaching was not as inspirational in mathematics as it was in English and was not equally effective in all year groups. Systems to improve and monitor the quality of teaching have been established relatively recently. Therefore, there has been insufficient time to see an established picture of consistent effectiveness across the school. Thus, this will remain an area for development.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders and governors fulfil statutory requirements when appointing new members of staff. Staff, including governors, have received high-quality training. As a result, staff know how to recognise signs of neglect or abuse and are very clear about the school's procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they have regarding the safeguarding of pupils.

Parents and pupils feel that the school is a safe place to be. Pupils are taught about how to stay safe online, and the pupils I spoke to could speak knowledgeably about how to use the internet responsibly and what they should do to ensure their personal safety. They consider bullying and bad behaviour to be rare and they are confident that staff would listen to them and deal effectively with any problems.

### **Inspection findings**

- You were rightly concerned about the dip in standards in mathematics in 2017. You have been quick to address this by changing the approach to mathematics teaching. Pupils are now having learning opportunities which strengthen and deepen their understanding of mathematics. Inspection evidence confirms your

view that pupils currently in the school are making better progress. However, these improvements still need to be built on and sustained to ensure consistency in the quality of teaching and learning for every child.

- To ascertain that the school remains good, I also considered the quality of writing across the school. I found that pupils are given many opportunities to write extensively, including opportunities to write in the context of other curriculum areas. A particular strength in the teaching across the school is the continuous challenge by teachers to encourage pupils to choose more sophisticated grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. Pupils respond well to this.
- Pupils get off to a strong start learning phonic sounds. Learning opportunities are well pitched so that pupils make strong progress.
- Given the large and relatively recent changes in staffing, alongside some changes in governance, I spent some inspection time focusing on leadership at all levels across the school. It is clear that leadership is effective. Staff said that they feel supported and valued by you. They said that you share a clear vision; you work collaboratively and are approachable. You have worked to develop your middle and senior leaders so that leadership capacity is maximised. You have provided a clear model of leadership, which enables all leaders to fulfil their roles with increasing autonomy and effectiveness. However, the quality of teaching and learning remains uneven across year groups, particularly where there is insufficient focus on providing challenge.
- The governing body is knowledgeable about the school, because it is kept very well informed by leaders. Governors hold senior leaders to account for the impact of their work to effect improvements. Minutes from governors' meetings demonstrate their ability to ask searching and challenging questions of senior leaders. They also ensure that leaders are supported and their efforts are appreciated.
- Governors manage the finance and resources that are available to the school efficiently. They are fully aware of the additional funding to support sport provision. They are keen to ensure that this funding provides pupils with opportunities to engage in a variety of sports that may not necessarily have been available to them otherwise.
- My discussions with pupils, parents and staff revealed that they are happy with the school's work. Pupils enjoy coming to school, as evidenced by their very high rates of attendance. At the time of the previous inspection, behaviour and safety were judged to be outstanding, and this inspection would indicate that this aspect of the school's provision has been maintained. Staff morale is also extremely high. One member of staff said, 'Dunnington School is a unique place for children to learn alongside incredibly dedicated staff who genuinely care and strive to provide inspiring learning experiences that will equip children with lifelong skills and a desire to continue learning for learning's sake.'

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Strategies that are put in place to improve outcomes in mathematics, including the provision of constant challenge for all pupils, are firmly embedded in all classes
- The existing strengths in teaching are built on and extended, resulting in a consistent level of high-quality teaching and learning across the school
- Further opportunities are made for pupils to learn the basic skills of English and mathematics across the curriculum, particularly in outdoor play and especially in the early years foundation stage.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Davies  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, other members of school staff and members of the governing body. I also spoke to your local authority adviser. Together, you and I planned the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. We visited classes in the school together to observe pupils' learning, speak with them and look in their books. I looked at an extensive range of current books from each year group and a sample of books retained from the last academic year. I also spoke with pupils at break and during the day. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day and considered 55 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I looked at a range of documentation, including information about the work of the governors, safeguarding, attendance and behaviour. I also scrutinised and discussed the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement.