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Mr Ewart Gibbs
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Dear Mr Gibbs

Short inspection of Leys Farm Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 July 2013.

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 continued to ensure that providing a safe, caring and friendly place to learn is of the utmost importance. The respect and kindness pupils show to each other, and the support they get to be the best citizens they can be, is excellent. Parents and carers speak highly of the school's dedication to listening to their children and of the time and care that staff take to address their needs. Grandparents too speak positively about the effective communication between home and school. Many were eager to be involved in the recent Grandparents' Gardening Week.

Leaders' vision, as highlighted on the school website, to create 'a broad and balanced curriculum that helps pupils to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens' is quickly apparent when speaking to pupils. They enjoy learning because of the emphasis staff place on first-hand experiences and developing life skills. Pupils are proud of their school and everyone in it. They rise to their positions of responsibility, most notably their work as buddies to other pupils in school. This role is rightly seen as highly important to pupils' well-being. Buddies said that the training they receive supports them in helping others. Pupils agree, and most said that speaking to a buddy would be their first port of call if they needed help or advice. Buddies are well trained in knowing when to get an adult to support them in this work.

In your aim to continue to improve the school, you are receptive to advice and

direction from external advisers, including those from the local authority. You have strengthened the school development plan, making sure that it contains clear priorities, so that everyone knows what needs to be done to improve outcomes for pupils. You have implemented a school assessment system that informs leaders of the proportions of pupils who are working at the expected standards for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders use this to successfully identify which pupils need further support to catch up with the national expectations. However, this system does not give you clear information about the progress that particular groups or classes of pupils are making. Therefore, you cannot be confident that pupils of all abilities are making strong enough progress from their starting points. You and governors know that this information would help you to be much more precise in your direction of support for pupils, particularly those of middle and higher ability. Leaders agree that work with other schools and their leaders will support your leaders and teachers in checking that these assessments are accurate.

At the last inspection, you were asked to build on the existing strengths in leadership by developing the roles of middle leaders. All teachers now each lead an area of the curriculum. They are very keen to have an effect on the development of pupils' skills in their subjects. They look for ways to link areas of learning in activities to deepen pupils' understanding. For example, lessons in physical education include work about healthy eating and mental health and well-being. Several middle leaders have worked together to increase opportunities for outdoor learning. This has resulted in pupils being involved in community work, and has led to their achievement of awards such as the Lincolnshire Trust Young Environmentalists Award and the North Lincolnshire Best Kept School Garden. You agree that middle leaders have not all had the opportunity to fully check the progress that pupils are making in their subjects, through checks on teaching and school assessment information, and looking at pupils' work.

You were also asked to make sure that issues arising from the monitoring of lessons and pupils' work are followed up to ensure more consistency across the school. Pupils' current work in English and mathematics shows where leaders have directed particular improvement, such as teachers' clear focus on grammar and reading comprehension skills, which is consistent across classes. Leaders' checks on pupils' recorded work are focused on the school's improvement priorities. However, you agree that these checks do not always combine checks on the quality of teaching and teacher assessment information across the whole school. As a result, leaders' knowledge of the improvements in their subject is heavily centred on the age group that they teach.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have built a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Adults and pupils understand that safety is of the highest importance. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders record concerns carefully and consult well with different agencies. The local authority provides clear systems, policies and structures for the recruitment of staff. It supports the school in completing some of the necessary checks.

You value your partnerships with the Safeguarding Board, mindful that this keeps you up to date with information and procedures. You welcome the weekly updates from a specialist safeguarding consultant, provided by the local authority for all of its schools.

A varied and informative range of activities take place to teach pupils about how to stay safe, physically and mentally. Pupils talked maturely about the work they have been involved in, for example taking part in a film about the work of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, a well-being week, a debate to find out whether young people really do believe that girls can be plumbers and boys can be hairdressers, recent work resulting from a road safety demonstration in school, and work in relation to growing up and relationships.

The school has received its eighth Diana Award for its anti-bullying work. Pupils spoke highly of the kindness and respect demonstrated between adults and pupils. They said that on the extremely rare occasions when bullying occurs, buddies and adults quickly support pupils and issues are resolved. It is clear that showing respect, and an understanding of why everyone should behave respectfully, is high on the school's agenda.

Inspection findings

- The recent reorganisation of the governing body has strengthened governors' understanding of their roles and their knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are very clear about which areas of school most need improvement and demonstrate the skills to appropriately support and challenge leaders in making sure that these improvements happen.
- During the inspection, I wanted to find out the reasons for the notable differences in pupils' outcomes in reading and writing. Pupils' performance in reading at the end of Year 6 has consistently been weaker than their performance in writing and mathematics. School leaders, governors and the local authority are very clear that this is a main priority for improvement. Leaders and teachers have put in place a range of activities to improve pupils' skills in reading and to widen their reading experiences. New resources are supporting teachers in planning activities that match pupils' needs and meet the national year group expectations. Initiatives such as local footballers making regular visits to read with pupils and authors visiting to talk about their work are motivating pupils to read, particularly the boys. Work with the local authority, as part of its literacy development programme, is supporting improvement in pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills. The visit from an author of children's books, as part of this work, inspired pupils to produce a range of creative work. Pupils' progress can be seen in their written work and by listening to them read and talk about books. Leaders agree that a more refined school assessment system, and time to check on the work of all year groups, will support them in having a more precise view of the progress that all pupils are making.
- Over time, outcomes in writing have been strong. Pupils' current work shows an

emphasis on improving grammar skills and recording responses to reading comprehension work. Alongside this, pupils have opportunities to apply their writing skills to work in other areas of the curriculum. For example, as part of their history work about the Second World War, Year 6 pupils spent time in the outdoor Anderson shelter, sharing their thoughts and ideas about what this experience would have been like for people in the war. This helped them to create high-quality pieces of writing. Leaders agree that, so far this year, some of the opportunities for such extended writing have been more limited. Some classes do not have as many opportunities to test out their skills by writing at length. In addition, while the school's marking policy is applied consistently, and improvements in work are discussed as a class, the leadership team recognises that there is a need to ensure that best practice is shared by pupils being given clear direction to edit and improve their work.

- As part of the life-skills-focused curriculum, leaders have created abundant opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding outdoors. A range of different areas have been created for pupils to learn about growing, nature and wildlife. The variety of produce that pupils grow is used in cooking activities and in the school kitchen. Pupils learn where their food comes from and how they can eat healthily.
- Supporting the most able pupils in their learning has been a focus for school leaders. This is most apparent in mathematics in which pupils' work and discussions with them show how they are encouraged to apply their skills to a variety of tasks and give reasons for their answers. Leaders know that there is more work to be done in supporting pupils in deepening their skills and understanding across the curriculum, particularly for the most able pupils in reading.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- they implement more thorough and refined systems to check on the progress that pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics, from their starting points and across the year
- work to improve standards in reading continues, with a focus on supporting pupils in achieving greater depth in their learning
- teachers give clear direction to pupils in how to edit and improve their writing
- work that has started to share best practice and check teachers' assessments with other schools continues
- middle leaders have time to focus on the progress that pupils are making in different subjects across their time in school.

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

Yours sincerely

Kate Rowley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I looked at specific aspects of the school's work, including leadership, the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, and safeguarding arrangements.

You and I worked closely together throughout the inspection, observing teaching and learning, looking at pupils' work and discussing the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Much of this took place with the deputy headteacher. I reviewed school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding. We studied and discussed the school assessment information. I met with school leaders, the learning mentor, pupils, a senior school improvement officer from the local authority and representatives from the governing body. I spoke to parents before school and noted the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View.