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Mrs Jo Blackburn
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Dear Mrs Blackburn

Short inspection of Dunton Bassett Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 February 2018, 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. During my visit, I gained a sense of a clear 'direction of travel' for the school and a culture of increasingly rapid improvements. Your evaluation of the school's performance is accurate and improvement plans focus on relevant actions to raise standards. You have introduced, or are further developing, a wide range of initiatives, which is improving standards in the school. The school is shortly to join the Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust and you are already working productively and closely with the trust.

You and other staff are successfully tackling many of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Leaders were asked to ensure that information about pupils' progress is used more effectively. With the support of the trust, you have introduced a system which enables you to evaluate the progress of different groups of pupils in different classes and to identify pupils who are not making the progress they should. As a result, you and other staff have a good understanding of how well pupils are doing in each class and have regular, detailed meetings to discuss the pupils' learning. Information is used to identify and to review the actions needed to help pupils who need to catch up.

Leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that tasks provide sufficient challenge. This has been partially achieved. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are increasing the level of challenge for pupils of different abilities, so that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able,

make better progress. In mathematics, for example, teachers often provide pupils with appropriate activities, including opportunities for pupils to practise their problem-solving and reasoning skills. This is not consistent in all classes. Teachers have received a range of training to develop further their skills in assessing pupils' learning. Sometimes, teachers do not consistently use information about pupils' learning as well as they could in order to decide when to move the pupils on to more challenging work more quickly.

Leaders were also asked to provide more opportunities for pupils to write in different subjects and for different purposes. Pupils' books show that this has been achieved. Staff have ensured that pupils write at length in science, history, religious education and other subjects. Pupils' work shows that the pupils have stamina for writing. The often strong content of their written work is sometimes let down by inaccurate spelling, grammar and punctuation. Teachers are not consistently and rigorously challenging pupils to use spelling, grammar and punctuation accurately as well as the pupils are able.

The chair of the governing body has a clear overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the progress made by pupils in different classes and subjects. The governing body is increasingly sharp in holding leaders to account for the progress made by different groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Improvements to the school's systems for checking on pupils' progress are supporting the governing body in doing this. The governing body recognises that it has not been as stringent as it could have been in holding the school to account for the use and impact of the pupil premium. The trust recently completed a review of the use of the pupil premium funding and the governing body has identified this as an area in which it can improve its effectiveness.

Pupils behave and conduct themselves well at all times of the school day. Teachers successfully encourage them to be reflective, polite and caring. Pupils understand British values and the importance of treating each other with respect. For example, a pupil in Year 6 told me that it was important to, 'treat each other as you would want to be treated... so you have a good attitude.' Pupils listen well and apply themselves to all that is asked of them. Teachers praise pupils' work and efforts and, as a result, pupils generally have positive attitudes to their learning.

The majority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, or who spoke with me, were positive about all aspects of the school. Many commented on the friendly, caring, nurturing ethos of the school, the approachability of staff and the positive gains that their children are making in their learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. School systems for recording concerns are thorough. Leaders take timely action when they have any concerns about pupils' welfare and well-being. Leaders ensure that staff receive relevant and

up-to-date training. The school's single central record and recruitment processes are thorough. Some minor amendments were made during the inspection.

Pupils spoke with confidence about how the school teaches them to keep themselves safe, for example when online, or about road safety or 'stranger danger'. The very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View said that their children feel safe. A minority of parents raised concerns with regard to the school's tackling of bullying. I could find no evidence to support this. Pupils say that bullying is rare and are confident that staff will respond to concerns they may have.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and other staff have benefited from work with a teaching school alliance, other local schools and the trust. A wide range of training, particularly more recently, has brought about improvements in leadership, teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders and governors, with the support of the trust, are bringing about increasingly rapid improvements.
- Current work and the school's information about pupils' progress show that the majority of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects. Sometimes teachers do not use information about pupils' learning sharply enough to ensure that pupils move on quickly enough to more challenging work. Sometimes, work is not matched well to pupils' needs and so some pupils, particularly the most able, do not consistently make the progress that they should.
- In mathematics, teachers often use visual imagery and physical apparatus well to promote pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts and different methods of calculation. Overall, teachers also promote pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills. However, this is stronger in some classes than in others. Teachers have not taught some pupils to interpret and understand mathematical problems independently or to demonstrate and communicate their reasoning.
- The often strong content of pupils' writing is sometimes let down by poor spelling, grammar and punctuation. Sometimes, pupils make repeated errors, which teachers do not correct. Teachers do not consistently challenge pupils rigorously enough to ensure that the pupils are more precise and accurate and apply their skills and understanding in ways that are appropriate to their ability. As a result, some pupils' progress in writing is not as rapid as it could be.
- Attendance was a line of enquiry explored during the inspection. While small numbers of pupils affect overall figures, attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, has been too low over time. Leaders have recently been more robust in emphasising the importance of attendance to parents, as well as supporting families whose children have high levels of persistent absence. The recently appointed education welfare officer is beginning to have an impact on attendance. As a result of leaders' actions, attendance has improved during this academic year compared with figures for the end of 2017. Nonetheless, attendance is still below average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they are relentless in promoting high attendance, including through the use of the pupil premium to help to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils
- all teachers expect pupils to use accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling in their writing and in all subjects
- pupils are taught the skills they need to solve mathematical problems and to explain clearly their reasoning
- teachers make more effective use of information about pupils' learning to match work accurately to pupils' abilities and to decide when to move pupils on to challenging work more quickly, particularly the most able.

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

Yours sincerely

John Lawson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I scrutinised a variety of documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' attainment and progress, staff performance, and leaders' plans for improvement. I assessed the impact on standards of leaders' actions taken since the last inspection, as well as additional lines of enquiry. I considered the six responses to the staff questionnaire and the 12 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

I met with you and a member of the governing body. I also met with the chief executive officer of the Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the day. I met with pupils informally during the school day, as well as in a formal meeting with a group of pupils. I observed teaching and learning in all classes jointly with you. During these visits, I looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils to evaluate the quality of their learning. I also examined, with you, pupils' work in a sample of their books.