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Mrs Vicky Johnson
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Johnson

Short inspection of Marshchapel Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 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 July 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since your appointment in September 2017, you have worked effectively with the local authority. You have addressed head on the long-standing issues you inherited. For example, prior to your appointment, there had been some considerable changes in staffing and change in the organisation of the school. With the support of the local authority and the KYRA Teaching School Alliance, you have established a united team of staff and managed necessary improvements well.

Marshchapel Primary School is a much smaller than average-sized primary school. It is a welcoming, friendly place to learn. You and your team have ensured that pupils enjoy their learning and are well cared for. As a result, pupils are happy and the vast majority of parents and carers are supportive. For example, one parent stated, 'The school is very supportive of my children's needs. I am very happy with the education they receive.' Another parent praised the 'family feel' of the school. You promote a caring ethos where pupils are valued and known well by you and your staff.

Relationships between pupils and adults are good. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school. They are respectful and behave well. Consequently, they are enthusiastic learners. For example, one Year 4 pupil told me, 'I liked learning through topics like

our 'chocolate' topic because we got to learn all about the process of making chocolate from cacao beans. It was really interesting.' You are aware, however, that pupils have not had sufficient opportunities to learn through a rich and broad curriculum in the past. You have acted promptly to use funding provided by the local authority to purchase the resources to develop a new approach to the curriculum. You are confident that, as the curriculum develops over time, the improved learning opportunities will enhance pupils' experiences of the wider world and raise their aspirations.

Since your appointment as executive headteacher, you have quickly got to know the strengths and areas to develop in the school. You have worked successfully with the local authority to develop clear strategic plans for what is required to shape and drive the future of the school. For example, you have continued to improve the quality of teaching and learning for pupils in Years 5 and 6. These pupils are now educated with pupils in Years 5 and 6 at your federated school. As a result, pupils receive good teaching and increased opportunities to socialise with their peers.

The local authority commissioned a review of governance of the school. Governors have benefited from effective training from a national leader of governance. As a result, they provide you with increasing levels of challenge and support. They regularly check the actions taken by leaders to secure improvements. Nevertheless, governors have taken longer to improve their understanding of their roles and responsibilities than they should have done. As a result, some school improvements have not been dealt with as swiftly as necessary.

The areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have only partially been dealt with due to significant changes in leadership and staffing. Improved teaching strategies have ensured that pupils are more consistently challenged in their learning. However, you acknowledge that these strategies need more time to embed and can be improved further in all subjects, particularly the challenge for the most able pupils. The teaching and learning of mathematics have improved, but you are aware that there is still further work to be done to improve pupils' reasoning skills to develop their understanding. Some subject leaders are very new to their roles so are still developing their understanding of their responsibilities. You have accessed high-quality specialist support through the KYRA Teaching School Alliance to ensure that leaders develop quickly and are able to lead their subjects well. The leader for English is secure in her understanding of her role and is beginning to effectively hold staff to account for the standard of teaching and the progress of pupils in reading and writing. You agree, however, that teachers need to have higher expectations for pupils' English spelling, grammar and punctuation, to improve their writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have created a good culture of safeguarding in the school. Governors and staff benefit from regular and relevant training on child protection. They know what to do to keep pupils safe. You work with families and refer concerns to other agencies in a timely and prompt manner. Staff are vigilant and are prepared to take decisive

action when needed, to secure pupils' well-being. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and said that they feel safe. They said that incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are rare but when they do occur staff deal with issues quickly and fairly. Pupils feel well cared for by staff in school. One pupil told me that he feels that school is 'a very friendly place where everyone looks after one another.' Pupils are taught about potential risks and how to stay safe in different situations. These include how to use the internet safely and the dangers from strangers.

Inspection findings

- A focus for the inspection was the quality of the teaching of reading and mathematics. For at least two years, the progress pupils made in their reading and mathematics by the time they left the school at the end of Year 6 has been in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. Leaders have improved standards in mathematics by reviewing the way it is taught. They accessed good-quality training for staff and introduced new strategies to ensure that the teaching of mathematics improved and that there is a consistent approach across the school. Consequently, standards in mathematics improved in 2017 and a higher proportion of pupils attained the expected standards.
- The leader for mathematics is new to her role and to the school. She has experience of subject leadership and is determined to improve standards further. She is about to begin working with a specialist leader in education for mathematics, to ensure that her actions for improvement are sharply focused. She has correctly identified that pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics in order to deepen their understanding.
- The leader for English has received effective training in new approaches for the teaching of reading. She has successfully trialled these approaches and has subsequently introduced them across the school to ensure that the teaching of reading is consistently good. The information you showed me indicates that, as a result, the majority of current pupils are making good progress in reading. Where they are not, you are providing pupils with focused additional support to enable them to make better progress.
- As part of our scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection, you and I discussed the quality of pupils' written work. You explained how you have taken some successful steps to raise standards in writing. Pupils have regular opportunities to write for different purposes, and you are increasing the opportunities for them to write at length to deepen their understanding. However, you are aware that teachers' expectations for pupils' English spelling, grammar and punctuation are not consistently high enough across a range of subjects, to ensure that more pupils make better progress in their writing.
- In 2016 and 2017, attendance was below the national average overall. You rigorously monitor the attendance of individual pupils and work well with pupils and their families to promote regular attendance. As a result, current attendance

figures are improving and are now close to the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers have consistently high expectations for pupils' English spelling, grammar and punctuation across a range of subjects
- pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics are consistently well developed across the school
- teachers use their assessments of pupils' learning to more accurately match pupils' work to their abilities to ensure that all pupils, particularly the most able, are sufficiently challenged in their learning.

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

Stephanie Innes-Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the leaders for English and mathematics. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and I met with a group of pupils. I met with a member of the governing body.

You and I visited pupils in classrooms together, including Years 5 and 6 pupils who were being taught at your federated school. We looked at a range of pupils' work together. We discussed the progress of different groups of pupils and the school's plans for improvement. I considered the responses of parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also considered the responses of staff to Ofsted's online survey for them. There were no responses to the pupils' survey. I scrutinised evidence from a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance, procedures and records for safeguarding and behaviour, information on how the pupil premium is spent, an analysis of attendance and a number of policy documents. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.