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Mrs Nicky Donley  
Executive Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Donley

### **Short inspection of Kirton Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 5 June 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 May 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 the last inspection, the school has grown significantly to accommodate more pupils. The school's senior leadership team has changed due to staff leaving the school, and you have appointed new assistant headteachers to key roles such as the leadership of key stage 1.

You and the leadership team have ensured that pupils in key stage 2 consistently make progress above the national average. The amount of progress made is frequently in the top 10% of all schools nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils leaving the school at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics is well above the national average. The school's own assessment information indicates that pupils this year will again make better progress than that of other pupils will nationally.

Targeted support for disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 has enabled them to make better progress than that of pupils nationally. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils leaving the school at the expected standard is well above the national average for writing and mathematics and is in line with the national average in reading.

Your commitment to the development of pupils' understanding of personal finance across the school is a strength. Pupils earn 'kirts', the school's own currency. You encourage pupils to save these in the school bank, managed and run by pupils. Pupils spend 'kirts' in the school's shop. Pupils have a secure understanding of financial planning and understand how this will relate to their future.

While progress and attainment in key stage 2 are high, the progress and attainment of pupils in the early years and key stage 1 are low. Pupils in the early years and key stage 1 are not making as much progress as they are capable of, as teachers' expectations of what they should achieve are too low. Too many pupils are leaving the early years and key stage 1 with attainment below the expected standard.

During the inspection, I spoke with one governor. She was knowledgeable about the high progress and attainment of pupils in key stage 2. She spoke of how the governing body is supportive of the school's work to develop pupils' understanding of personal finance and the development of mathematics. The governor was aware that pupils' attainment in the early years and key stage 1 was below the national average. However, she did not have a secure understanding of the progress that pupils in the early years and key stage 1 are making.

Of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, or who spoke with inspectors, the majority were positive about the work of the school. They believe that their children make good progress and are safe when in school. Some parents of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities said that additional support provided for their children is not always sufficient to meet their child's needs. Some parents commented that communication between the school and parents is not as effective as it could be, and there are few opportunities for parents to be involved in school life. They feel that the school's leadership team is not visible and members are sometimes not available to talk with parents.

Pupils enjoy school and are appreciative of the work teachers do to make their learning enjoyable. They enjoy earning 'kirts' to save in the school's bank and then spend in the shop. Of the pupils I spoke with, some said that the work they do in class is too easy and they often get to the challenge task. Pupils behave well in school. Pupils I spoke with were polite and well mannered. They were happy to talk about their learning and share their work with me. Pupils know that there is always someone available for them to talk to if they have a problem.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that there is a comprehensive programme of staff training for safeguarding pupils in place. All staff and volunteers have up-to-date training, including specific training on the impact of domestic violence, female genital mutilation and the 'Prevent' duty.

The designated safeguarding lead has a secure overview of the needs of vulnerable pupils. Leaders are swift to seek further guidance from external providers when

required. When pupils do not meet the local authority thresholds for support, the school provides support for the family when possible. The school's records for safeguarding are fit for purpose.

## **Inspection findings**

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported in class when appropriate. This includes the use of additional resources, adult support and additional support through one-to-one or small-group teaching. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do well in key stage 2 and make good progress. In the early years and key stage 1, pupils do not make as much progress as pupils further up the school.
- Leaders have recognised that pupils' attainment in key stage 1 is too low. Attainment in key stage 1 has been below the national average for the last two years. The school's own assessment information indicates that this will be so again this year. Leaders stated that Year 2 pupils in 2016 and 2017 did not make as much progress as expected because early years assessments for these pupils were inaccurate. Leaders have appointed an assistant headteacher to oversee changes to teaching and learning in key stage 1 in order to raise the attainment of pupils.
- Lessons observed in key stage 1 during the inspection and pupils' workbooks show that often pupils complete the same task. Teachers pre-teach some pupils before the lesson to ensure that they are able to complete the task. Pupils who are more able complete extension tasks. However, sometimes the tasks set are not challenging enough and many pupils complete the tasks quickly. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes not high enough. Pupils do not make as much progress as they should.
- Leaders have recognised that the proportion of children leaving the early years with a good level of development is well below the national average. Leaders have made changes to the teaching of English and mathematics to develop children's skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- During the inspection, observations of the new approach to writing showed that children have made progress since its introduction. However, it has had little time to affect the proportion of children set to achieve the early learning goals for writing by the end of the year. The school's own assessment information shows that the proportion of children who are set to achieve a good level of development this year will again be below the national average, although higher than in 2017.
- The school's assessment of children entering Reception suggests that they are well below age-related expectations; many of these pupils have attended the school's Nursery. Inspectors observed pupils in Nursery demonstrating learning characteristics in line with age-related expectations and were well prepared to begin Reception.
- Leaders for English and mathematics do not have a comprehensive understanding of how their actions are raising standards in the early years and

key stage 1. Leaders' acceptance that pupils come into the school well below the national average has clouded the view of pupils' progress and attainment. Subject leaders have not ensured that teachers' expectations of the progress that pupils should be making are high enough.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers' expectations of children in the early years are raised so more children achieve a good level of development by the end of the foundation stage
- teachers' expectations of pupils in key stage 1 are raised and tasks set match pupils' needs in key stage 1
- communication with parents supports pupils' learning, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
- subject leaders have a clear understanding of the impact of their actions on the progress that pupils are making.

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

Helen Williams  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and the head of the school and one governor. I spoke with the deputy head of school, the mathematics leader, the assistant headteacher for key stage 1 and the business manager. I spoke with seven pupils, one from each year group, as well as pupils in lessons. We toured the school together and observed learning taking place during the morning. This included writing and mathematics lessons. I also toured the school with the head of school and observed the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

During our tour of the school, I scrutinised a selection of pupils' workbooks. During the inspection, I examined a range of the school's documentation, including the self-evaluation document, improvement plan and documents relating to safeguarding. I considered published and internal information about pupils' attainment and progress.

I considered the views of parents gathered by speaking with them before school. I also considered the 27 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.