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Mrs Helen Hilton  
Headteacher  
The Little Gonerby Church of England Infant School  
Sandon Road  
Grantham  
Lincolnshire  
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Dear Mrs Hilton

### **Short inspection of The Little Gonerby Church of England Infant School, Grantham**

Following my visit to the school on 7 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 your school was judged to be good in May 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and the leadership team clearly articulate the school vision of 'growing and learning together'. You are ambitious and innovative. Governors said that the school leaders are 'exciting people to work with'.

School leaders and governors are rightly proud of the curriculum, which is engaging and challenging. Pupils enjoy learning. They talk with enthusiasm about the projects they are working on. They find the topics stimulating and were keen to talk to the inspector about the 'Wallace and Gromit' film scripts they have written.

The pupils at this school have a good start to their education because they are very well cared for and their learning is fun. Throughout the school, the classrooms are attractive and well organised. Routines for learning are well established and pupils respond well to them. Pupils know what the teachers expect of them and respond positively. Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming. They behave well both in lessons and at playtime and dinnertime. They are proud of their school. When asked to describe school in one word, they said 'fun', 'happy' and 'clever'. Parents and carers spoke very highly of the school and praised you for 'always being on the ball'. They find the school staff and leaders to be approachable and responsive. One parent said: 'I love the way they teach. The children have fun while they're learning'. You are keen to work closely with the wider community, for example through the very well supported grandparents' day.

You and your leadership team have correctly identified which areas for improvement to concentrate on and have been effective in making sure that areas for improvement given at the last inspection, and other weaknesses identified, are addressed successfully. For example, the leader for mathematics has introduced training for staff which has improved the teaching of mathematics and the progress that pupils make. You and your leadership team recognise that there is still work to be done, in particular in improving the teaching of writing and in raising rates of attendance.

The school's clear values of respect for all and commitment to developing confident individuals are at the heart of everything that you and the leadership team do and are clearly to be seen in the pupils' learning and in the very strong sense of school community.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Pupils said they feel safe at school. They talked knowledgeably about how school helps them to learn about staying safe, including being safe online, crossing the road, and how to play safely at school. All of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that their children were safe at school.

The school's systems for vetting who works at the school are well organised and robust. All staff and volunteers are provided with clear information about what they are expected to do to make sure children are safe. Staff understand and know how to use the school's systems for reporting concerns. Records are meticulous and well organised. Staff have taken part in up-to-date training about safeguarding and have been provided with clear guidance by the school leaders. Governors take their responsibilities around safeguarding very seriously and identify this as their number one priority. Governors have recently prioritised online safety as a particular focus for the school and have checked on the impact of that work.

Those school leaders who are responsible for child protection are tenacious in following up any concerns that the school might have about pupils who are vulnerable or at risk. They make sure that these pupils receive the help and support that they need. There are very few incidents of bad behaviour or bullying, and when these do occur, the school leaders ensure that they are dealt with effectively and quickly. There have been no exclusions for poor behaviour. The school leaders have a good understanding of any particular risks that the pupils at this school might face and have acted accordingly to ensure that staff are trained to keep children safe from these risks.

### **Inspection findings**

- Teachers use questioning skilfully to both deepen the pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking. There has been a strong focus on encouraging pupils to talk about mathematics and the pupils are very accustomed to being challenged to answer the question: 'How do you know?' from their teacher. The school's assessment information shows that pupils, both in the early years and in Year 1

and Year 2, make good progress in mathematics. The school has successfully increased the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard in mathematics by the end of Year 2.

- Challenging and thought-provoking questions are now central to the way that the pupils are taught. The topics that are being studied begin with a question, such as: 'What makes a place worth visiting?', 'What is creativity?' and 'What would it be like to live like royalty?' Work in pupils' books shows that there is less consistency about how teachers help pupils to understand how to improve their writing in Year 1 and Year 2.
- The gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils have narrowed. More disadvantaged pupils than before are making good or better progress, especially in reading. Disadvantaged pupils in the early years make good progress from their starting points. The additional government funds that the school receives to support the education of these pupils is used well by school leaders.
- However, some disadvantaged pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 do not make fast enough progress from their starting points. School leaders have recognised that gaps are not closing quickly enough and have rightly acted to ensure that teachers are even better at identifying the barriers that individual pupils face and helping them to overcome those barriers and to achieve well at school. The progress of these pupils is carefully tracked and the effectiveness of the support that they receive is adjusted as necessary.
- Progress in reading and mathematics is good in key stage 1. It has improved over the last two years. Reading is a particular strength and has been so over time.
- School leaders have correctly identified that improving progress in writing is a priority. The introduction of an agreed approach to letter formation and handwriting in early years has had a positive impact on pupils' progress in writing, especially in Reception and Year 1. However, the impact of this has not yet shown in the work of pupils in Year 2.
- Progress in writing is not consistently good for all pupils. Work in pupils' books shows that some pupils make slow progress in writing in Year 1 and Year 2. Spelling and punctuation is not as good as it should be. Although school leaders have identified writing as a priority area, they have not yet succeeded in ensuring that all pupils make the progress that they are capable of.
- School leaders have correctly identified improving attendance as a priority and you successfully improved attendance earlier in the year by employing a parenting support worker. However, attendance remains below the national average. School leaders are fully aware of this and are determined to improve it.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of writing is improved so that pupils' progress in writing is consistently good
- they improve attendance to be at least as good as the national average,

including the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Strauss  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, other school leaders and members of the governing body. I spoke with parents at the start of the day. I spoke to pupils during lessons and held a formal meeting with a group of pupils drawn from all year groups. I observed teaching and learning throughout the school jointly with you, the deputy headteacher and the early years leader. During these visits I looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils to evaluate the quality of their learning. With the headteacher and other school leaders I examined pupils' work in a sample of their books.

I examined a range of documents related to safeguarding, behaviour, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' attainment and progress and leaders' plans for improvement. I assessed the impact on teaching and learning of leaders' actions taken since the last inspection, as well as other lines of enquiry. I considered the 18 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, as well as the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire. I also considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.