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Mrs Leanne Steed
Headteacher
Holly Hill Primary and Nursery School
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Dear Mrs Steed

Short inspection of Holly Hill Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 13 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Holly Hill is a friendly and welcoming school of which pupils, parents, carers and staff are justifiably proud. You have recently been appointed as the headteacher and have provided drive and ambition after a period of significant instability in the leadership of the school. You work strategically and cohesively with the governors to ensure that provision for pupils across all areas of the school is improving. The newly formed leadership team works with clear vision and direction, facilitating rapid progress focused on areas of priority. This staff team, combined with knowledgeable and dedicated governors, has significant capacity to drive further improvement across the school.

The pristine school environment reflects the values that are central to the ethos of Holly Hill. Parents and pupils appreciate the support they are given and you and your staff work tirelessly to support those families who have a range of complex needs. Parents feel comfortable about approaching staff and consistently praised your friendliness and accessibility. One parent explained, 'There is a real buzz about the place and the ethos shines through.' You have high expectations of all groups of pupils and ensure that there is a consistency of approach to teaching, with a clear message that all pupils must succeed. Pupils value the happy atmosphere and know that teachers will always help them with their work. They enjoy the additional clubs

such as book and film club and really look forward to residential visits 'because you are still learning but don't know it!'

There has been considerable investment in developing teachers' subject knowledge and all staff have benefited from closer links with a number of school networks where expertise can be shared. Plans for improvement are effective and subject leaders prioritise where resources and training needs are to be focused to bring about further change. There is a systematic monitoring cycle that highlights strengths and areas for development. Leaders visit classrooms and analyse planning, as well as the quality of work in books, to prioritise the improvement of weaker areas of teaching. Governors are given detailed information about progress towards priorities, which allows them to effectively question and challenge leaders. As a result, the quality of teaching is good throughout the school.

Over the last year, the outdoor provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is much improved. For example, children are enjoying using the 'pick up and go' boxes filled with resources needed for a variety of activities. The boxes can be taken to any area of the unit. Many more children, particularly the boys, are now choosing to write. During my visit, we watched a cycling session introduced to improve children's physical skills. Children now have improved coordination and stronger core muscles. You have identified that children's physical development is a key area for development.

Writing at length has increased across a range of subjects since the last inspection. Curriculum themes are exciting and the use of a range of texts has been successful in inspiring pupils to write. As I walked around the school, there were many examples of pupils enjoying their writing. For example, in Year 6, pupils were preparing to write a newspaper report and were motivated and engaged in detailed research about football battalions in the First World War. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in their writing and standards are above national expectations by the time they leave school. Progress in reading, however, has not been as rapid. You acknowledge that greater challenge is needed, particularly for the most able pupils, so that they can achieve the highest levels of learning.

Since the last inspection, you have ensured that the quality of science teaching has improved. Pupils have good subject knowledge and you are insisting that there are increased opportunities for developing a more active, investigative approach to science teaching. Staff training has focused on developing links between subjects such as science, mathematics and physical education, and you intend to foster links with other schools to continue to develop their teaching practice.

Safeguarding is effective.

Since your appointment as headteacher, you have worked cohesively with other staff members, governors and members of the local authority to transform the safeguarding arrangements in school. You have increased and strengthened the safeguarding team to ensure that there is enough capacity to effectively deal with any situation that may arise. You have introduced clear policies and procedures and

ensured that all members of the school are appropriately trained. As a result, staff are vigilant and take their responsibilities seriously. You and your staff put the safety and welfare of pupils and families at the heart of all that you do. Good communication through weekly updates ensures that all staff are aware of changes in circumstances to vulnerable pupils and families. You have meticulously compiled historical information and all records detail concerns and actions that have been taken over time. Referrals to agencies are swift and you work closely with a wide group of practitioners to keep pupils safe. Records are comprehensive, stored securely and monitored by external auditors, as well as by the safeguarding governor.

A very large proportion of parents who responded to Parent View say that their child is happy and safe in school. They are full of praise for the staff and appreciate the care taken with their children. Summing up the views of many, one explained that 'Mrs Steed goes above and beyond and cares about all the children in the school.' Pupils say that any kind of falling-out or bullying is very rare. They know that there is a team of staff who are able to help them resolve any issues and they are taught how to keep safe in a number of situations, particularly online. They are clear about expectations for behaviour and feel the system is fair. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View would recommend the school to other parents.

Inspection findings

- The significant majority of children enter the Nursery with skills in all areas of learning below, and in some areas well below, those typically found nationally. Children make good progress in nearly all areas of development. Many children need additional support with their speech and language development, and the school has targeted additional resources to enable these children to make good progress. You have identified that progress in developing children's physical skills is slow and have plans to introduce new initiatives to improve their movement skills.
- You have made the teaching of phonics a priority in the school's development plan, as outcomes in the phonics screening check have been below the national average for the past three years. Staff have undertaken training and there have been changes in the approach to teaching phonics. This has brought about rapid improvements in teaching and most pupils now have secure phonics knowledge.
- Pupils make good progress in key stage 1 but do not yet meet the nationally expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of this phase. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of key stage 2, their attainment is more in line with their peers nationally in writing and mathematics and is now improving in reading. You recognise that most-able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, need to be more stretched and challenged in reading so that they can exceed standards set for their age.
- You have rightly directed your energies and resources on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school. You provide clear expectations of the quality of learning experiences that pupils should receive in lessons. The analysis

of pupils' work is used to inform progress meetings that focus on individual pupils' progress. These actions are helping current pupils to make rapid progress.

- The creation of a language-rich environment is improving children's communication and reading skills. You and your staff are determined to provide a range of texts and reading experiences so that all pupils extend their skills and are able to read more complex literature. However, not enough pupils make sufficient progress from their starting points in their reading comprehension skills.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is highly effective and parents are full of praise for the good progress their children make. They fully appreciate the time, care and nurture that are given to them.
- The governing body ensures that money allocated to support vulnerable pupils is spent effectively. Members of the governing body are clear that progress for this group of pupils must be accelerated and they carefully monitor the impact of the pupil premium spending.
- Attendance is a prime focus for the school and many initiatives have been introduced to encourage better attendance. Monitoring procedures are robust. Attendance is improving and is now close to national expectations for all groups of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is an increased focus on developing fine and gross motor skills to support children in acquiring the physical skills needed to write well
- all pupils are challenged and stretched enough to enable a greater proportion of them to achieve the highest levels of learning in reading.

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

Yours sincerely

Kate Nash
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, we discussed your self-evaluation and development plans. I also shared my key lines of enquiry with you. You accompanied me as I visited each class in the school, spending a short time in each. I viewed pupils' behaviour in and outside of lessons and spent time discussing their views of school. I met with

several members of the school staff, four governors, including the chair, a group of pupils and a number of parents. I held discussions with different leaders about safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, the curriculum and measuring pupils' progress. I viewed a range of documents and considered information related to attendance and how the pupil premium funding is spent. I held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. Together with your leadership team, we looked at a wide range of pupils' work. I examined the school's website to check that it meets the requirements on the publication of specified information. I analysed the responses to Ofsted's parent, staff and pupil questionnaires and any free-text comments.