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Mr Adam Rivett  
Acting Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Rivett

### **Short inspection of Littleport Community Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 September 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 March 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. In your post as deputy headteacher, you played a significant role in raising standards throughout the school. Now in your new role as acting headteacher this school year, you are determined to improve further on the good practice seen by inspectors during the previous inspection. With pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics improving year on year at the end of both key stages, you have strong foundations to build on.

Littleport Community Primary School is a vibrant and a happy place to learn. Staff, parents and carers, and pupils alike clearly enjoy being part of the school community. Parents I spoke with were particularly complimentary about the leadership, staff and the support that the school provides to help develop their children's self-esteem and confidence. Parents who responded to Ofsted's free-text questionnaire were hugely positive about their children's experiences at the school, saying that 'Littleport is a wonderful school with caring adults.' Another parent added, 'My son has made amazing progress, not just academically but in his whole outlook to work and his confidence.' These were just a few comments echoed by many other parents. Pupils told me they enjoy school and shared their aspirations to be, among other things, teachers, astronomers, mechanics and pianists.

Your staff appreciate the support and continued professional development they regularly receive. In all classes I visited, teachers demonstrated confidence, secure subject knowledge and enthusiasm for teaching. The many staff who responded to

Ofsted's online survey all said they enjoy working at the school and are proud to be a member of staff.

You and your leaders have made great strides in resolving the areas for improvement outlined in the previous inspection report. This is particularly the case for improving pupils' skills in spelling, grammar and punctuation, demonstrated in pupils' good outcomes at the end of Year 6 in 2016. Further improvements were achieved in 2017 when pupils' attainment was significantly higher than national averages at the expected and higher standards. On visiting lessons, it was evident that pupils are taught to apply grammar and punctuation skills early on in key stage 1. For example, I observed a lesson where Year 2 pupils were being taught to apply commas in their sentence work, using them to separate items in a list. Older pupils' written work demonstrated that they have a good grasp of how to apply spelling, grammar and punctuation accurately within their writing.

Another area for improvement highlighted in the previous inspection report was about pupils' learning behaviours in lessons. On inspection, I saw pupils who are keen to learn, engaging positively in whole-class learning. Teachers encourage pupils by providing carefully chosen activities, so that they can participate and share their understanding with confidence.

You and your leaders have successfully raised standards in mathematics. Your focus on developing pupils' mathematics skills has continued to lead to strong outcomes for pupils across the school. Pupils have opportunities to apply and practise their mathematics skills in a range of problem-solving tasks. I observed pupils in key stage 2 confidently and systematically using a variety of ways to work out mathematical problems. Teachers emphasise and model why 'getting it wrong' is often good learning and pupils told me that the activities they are given 'make you think'. As a result, pupils in key stage 2 achieved higher than national averages at the expected and higher standards at the end of 2017.

You have created a strong sense of equality and an appreciation of diversity that permeates your school. Pupils I spoke with recognised and could talk about the many different types of families that make up British society. Pupils complete work highlighting children's rights, and bold messages prominently displayed in school corridors remind pupils that people are 'all different' and 'all equal'. Pupils are encouraged to consider these aspects of our society further in their writing. For example, in one lesson, pupils in Year 5 were creating their own poems based on the poem 'The British (serves 60 Million)' by Benjamin Zephaniah, a poem that celebrates the diverse cultural heritage of Great Britain. They produced their own poems that were both thoughtful and meaningful.

Your strong and passionate leadership team share your exciting vision to improve pupils' outcomes across all subjects. Together, you have reviewed and designed your curriculum with a view to support pupils' learning at a deeper level across all curriculum subjects. You work closely with other schools, using educational research to develop staff knowledge and understanding. The research programme has helped leaders identify areas for improvement and deliver relevant staff professional

development. Leaders' research work undertaken so far continues to inform your planning of the curriculum effectively.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Checks on all employees' suitability to work with children are complete. Concerns about pupils are recorded appropriately, suitably organised and actions are timely.

Pupils who I spoke with told me they feel safe at school and all staff who completed Ofsted's online staff survey agree pupils are safe. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, overwhelmingly agreed that their children are safe and happy at Littleport Community Primary School.

### **Inspection findings**

- Although attainment and progress in 2017 had improved upon outcomes in 2016, we agreed that writing was an appropriate key line of enquiry. This was because pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2 were lower in writing than in mathematics and reading. I was also interested to find out what the reason for this was, particularly as there were significant improvements in pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation skills, as confirmed in the 2017 end-of-key-stage-2 national tests.
- You shared last year's pupils' writing examples with me from across the school. Presentation was of a high standard and it was evident that many pupils made good or better progress. Pupils self-correct and teachers' guidance moves pupils' learning on effectively. Pupils I spoke with were able to tell me what they needed to do next in their writing and that they appreciate the feedback they get from their teachers about how to improve their work.
- You had identified, however, that last year pupils were not given enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in tasks across many of the curriculum areas and for a variety of purposes. This was preventing them from reaching greater depth at key stage 2 and making the progress they should.
- In addition, you identified that pupils do not consistently have enough experience of rich and varied vocabulary. In lessons I observed, teachers encouraged pupils to think and write imaginatively. For example, in a Year 5 lesson focusing on language, pupils were identifying different types of verbs along with descriptive vocabulary. Words such as 'swiftly' and 'cautiously' were offered by pupils as exciting and rich vocabulary.
- Your current curriculum design encompasses reading so that at the beginning of a new topic a class book is read and learned to give pupils a range of experiences. This is enabling pupils opportunities to build vocabulary and deepen their knowledge and understanding before writing. Pupils in Year 6 were very keen to tell me how much they love reading, and how reading gives them ideas that help them write exciting and interesting sentences with improved vocabulary.

- My second line of enquiry was to look at why the proportion of pupils who met the expected standards in the phonics screening check, although improving, has been below national averages for the last three years. Teaching and learning of English across key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 support phonics learning, with prompts displayed and teachers providing reminders during lessons. Small-group support in phonics continues throughout year groups until pupils can read confidently and reach the required standard. In addition, you are successfully engaging parents, for example through library workshops that encourage parents to read with their children.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils can read fluently and have acquired the necessary skills to approach comprehension activities. This was confirmed in the end-of-key-stage-2 tests, where pupils exceeded the national average at the expected and higher standards in reading in 2017.
- Your current school information for 2018 shows that the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 has improved again this year and their attainment is broadly in line with the national average. You agreed that the assessment of phonics teaching and learning needs to be more finely tuned. This would enable pupils who have a low starting point when they enter the school to make good progress so that they reach the expected standard by the time they leave Year 2.
- Achievement for disadvantaged pupils was highlighted as an area for improvement at the time of the previous inspection. Your leader for disadvantaged pupils works with other schools to share and improve practice. Actions have been particularly effective in ensuring that these pupils make strong progress in reading. Published information for 2017 showed that disadvantaged pupils were making progress in line with other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Additionally, disadvantaged pupils' attainment was broadly in line with national averages and above at the higher standards in reading. However, there were few pupils meeting greater depth in writing and the higher standards in mathematics at the end of key stage 2, and no disadvantaged pupils meeting greater depth at the end of key stage 1.
- Your pupil progress meetings with leaders and teachers focus on achievement for different pupil groups. Your tools for sharing pupil progress information with all staff have been successful in highlighting concerns, where support is needed for individual pupils and pupil groups. In addition, teaching assistants are benefiting from training to understand more fully pupils' barriers to learning. However, we discussed the need for an even more precise focus on the most able disadvantaged pupils during lessons, when they have individual support, and during pupil progress meetings. This was to ensure that these pupils are sufficiently challenged to make the progress they should in order to reach the higher standards of attainment.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide pupils with more opportunities to write regularly for a range of

purposes across a range of curriculum subjects, so that more pupils reach the expected standards and greater depth at the end of each key stage

- the assessment of phonics teaching and learning ensures that pupils with low starting points make good and better progress so that they reach the expected standard by the time they leave Year 2
- assessment activities focus more precisely on the progress of the most able pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, so that more pupils are able to make the progress they should and reach the higher standards of attainment.

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

Yours sincerely

Cindy Impey  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

We discussed the lines of enquiry for this inspection, areas for further improvement and information about current pupils' attainment and progress. I visited all classes and held meetings with you, senior leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority. I spoke with pupils and a number of parents at the beginning of the school day. I examined policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils. I gathered a range of evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and assessment. This included joint meetings with you, your deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. I looked at examples of pupils' work from last year and a range of abilities. The views of 84 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered as well as 76 responses parents made using the free-text service. I also considered 24 responses from staff.