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Mrs Joanne Carroll
Headteacher
Thorngumbald Primary School
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Dear Mrs Carroll

Short inspection of Thorngumbald Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 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 January 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.**

Your passion and commitment to the pupils, staff and wider community the school serves is clear. You have good relationships with staff and pupils and you have created a climate of warmth, care and pride. The school environment is well organised, used well and models the standards you expect from your pupils. Leaders, teachers and non-teaching staff feel that you provide them with the support that they need to carry out their roles. Pupils say that they are happy at school and feel safe. Pupils are keen to participate in lessons. They settle into learning well at the start of lessons and move between groups sensibly. A large proportion of parents and carers who made their views known say that their children are happy and safe at school. The majority of parents would recommend your school to other parents and families.

You have experienced significant changes to your team of teachers and leaders since the last inspection. Many of the staff are new to their roles this year. Leaders now have clear roles and responsibilities. Since your time at the school, you have begun to implement plans to make a range of improvements but some have not yet had the intended effect. For example, there are still not enough pupils reaching age-related expectations at the end of key stage 1, and pupils' attainment in writing is still identified as an area that you need to improve. You have identified a range of

areas that the school needs to develop but these are not closely focused enough on the most urgent priorities. Sometimes, the plans you write lack detail, and this means that these plans do not have the desired effect or take too long to make a difference.

Following the school's last inspection, it was identified that the presentation of pupils' work needed to improve. You have worked hard with your team to put in place a new approach to handwriting and presentation. Your new handwriting approach helps children form letters from the earliest age and develops their skills as they move through the school. In some classes, teachers use the handwriting approach when they write to reinforce their expectations with pupils. You have provided teachers and other adults with a list of non-negotiables that you expect to see when pupils record their learning in books. As a result, the work that pupils produce has improved. It is neater, better presented and demonstrates a greater sense of pride than before.

During the last inspection, inspectors highlighted the need to sharpen introductions to lessons so that pupils had more time to develop their skills. I observed good routines that allowed pupils to move between groups quickly and sensibly. Pupils showed high levels of independence when doing this, and this helped them to start their lessons quickly. When teachers had planned lessons effectively, there was a real sense of determination and urgency. For example, pupils in Year 6 relished the challenge of partitioning numbers that reached the millions and were keen to move on to even more challenging tasks. However, we observed other lessons where too much time was taken explaining activities, when pupils already knew what to do. This meant that the time they had to practise and extend their skills was reduced.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements, policies and procedures are fit for purpose and carry out their responsibilities diligently. Thorough checks are made when new staff are recruited and there are detailed induction procedures to ensure that new staff are well prepared to deal with any safeguarding issues that could occur. All staff are aware of the latest changes to safeguarding guidance and these changes are reflected in the school's safeguarding policy.

Staff and governors have received relevant training to ensure that they are aware of a wide range of potential safeguarding issues. Leaders provide staff with regular updates throughout the year. Staff know what to do and who to share information with should they have any concerns about the welfare of a pupil.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through the school's curriculum. They know how to keep themselves safe, for example, when they are using the internet. Both staff and parents say that they feel their children are safe in school and that behaviour is good.

Inspection findings

- My first inspection focus was to check whether leaders have acted effectively to raise standards in writing. Outcomes in writing declined in 2017 and were below the national average in key stage 2. In key stage 1, outcomes in writing have been below the national average for several years. In 2018, attainment improved in key stage 2, but the progress that pupils make still needs to improve. The standards pupils reach by the end of key stage 1 remained stubbornly low. Leaders have identified that writing needs to improve but the plans in place to make these improvements lack detail and are inhibited by the large number of other school priorities that have been identified.
- When we looked at writing books, there was some evidence of pupils making good progress. However, this was too variable and progress was limited in some year groups. This was reflected in the school's assessment information, which shows that not enough pupils are reaching the standards you expect in some year groups. Books provide evidence of pupils writing for a variety of purposes, and there are occasional opportunities for them to use this writing in other subjects. However, again, this is variable across the school and, overall, pupils do not have enough opportunity to apply their writing skills across the curriculum. Sometimes, activities are not planned carefully enough to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Evidence in books shows that some tasks are not challenging enough for the most able pupils. Similarly, there are examples where tasks are not well matched to the needs of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. This means that these pupils do not make enough progress in their writing, particularly in key stage 1.
- I wanted to check how effectively leaders, including subject leaders, had improved the quality of teaching. During the previous inspection, inspectors identified a need for leaders to undertake a rigorous programme of monitoring teaching and learning throughout school. Inspectors recommended that subject leaders analyse pupils' achievement carefully to assess learning for all groups of pupils. Since the last inspection, outcomes for pupils have remained below the national average and have been particularly low at the end of key stage 1. Leaders now have plans in place to check the quality of teaching over the academic year. The majority of the school's leadership team are new to their roles. Some of these leaders have not had the support needed to carry out their roles effectively and to bring about the changes you identify in your school priorities. Some leaders do not have the time they need to carry out their monitoring of teaching and learning so that they can provide appropriate support. This means that the capacity of the leadership team is limited.
- You have worked closely with local schools and have made changes to the way that assessment information is checked in English and mathematics. The standards that pupils reach and the progress that they make are now checked each half term. This information is discussed with staff so that they can use this information to inform their plans. However, leaders do not yet monitor whether teachers act on these meetings. As a result, leaders cannot be sure that the actions they take are having the desired effect.
- The leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics is

underdeveloped. You have begun to organise the school's plans for art and music so that teachers have a better understanding of what they need to teach. However, it is unclear what teachers should teach in other subjects within the curriculum. This means that teachers do not plan to build on pupils' prior learning as they move through the school. The evidence in pupils' theme books shows that pupils do not get the opportunity to study subjects other than English and mathematics in enough depth. They do not make enough progress in these subjects. Leaders are not able to be assured that pupils make good progress in these subjects as the checks that leaders make are not rigorous enough.

- I wanted to check the effect of additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. In 2017, the proportion of pupils who have SEN that reached the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 was low. The progress that these pupils made was well below the national average. You have appointed a new leader to coordinate support for these pupils. She has put in place new systems to identify and support pupils who have SEN. Children are now identified earlier when they show signs that they may need more support. Parents are involved in discussing the support that these pupils receive and are kept well informed throughout the year. Teaching assistants provide effective support for individuals and groups of pupils. They ask questions that challenge misconceptions and provide guidance that allows these pupils to build their confidence during lessons. However, evidence in books shows that, too often, the activities that teachers plan for pupils who have SEN are not precisely matched to their needs. This means that pupils who have SEN sometimes struggle to complete the tasks that they are given or do not make sufficient progress. The school's assessment information reflects this and shows that pupils who have SEN did not make sufficient progress in 2018.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- achievement in writing improves so that more pupils reach the age-related expectations by the end of key stage 1 and that pupils make good progress across both key stages
- teachers plan learning tasks that accurately meet the needs of all groups of pupils, including the most able and pupils who have SEN
- the new leadership team is coordinated and supported effectively so that outcomes improve at the end of key stage 1
- leaders' actions support teachers to improve the quality and depth of pupils' learning in subjects other than English and mathematics
- leaders' monitoring of teaching and the subsequent support that leaders provide enables pupils who have SEN to make good progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Jaimie Holbrook
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders, the English subject leader and your special educational needs coordinator. You shared your own written evaluations of the school and your improvement plans. I observed learning with you in key stage 1 and key stage 2. We looked at your own assessment information and pupils' work in books.

I reviewed a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding. I talked to pupils informally, as we observed learning in classes and around the school.

I took account of 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 22 free-text commentaries. I considered five responses to the staff survey. I also met with four members of the school's governing body and the school's local authority improvement partner.