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Mrs Louise Anyan  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Anyan

### **Short inspection of The Donington-on-Bain School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 October 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 October 2014.

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

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

With the effective support of the school's development partner, the headteacher of King Edward VI grammar school, you have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is extremely well led and managed. Leaders and governors know the school inside out and are fully committed to the continual improvement of the school. All leaders are fully aware of exactly which aspects need further improvement, and you work well with staff to bring about any necessary improvements. You and other leaders have done much to reduce the effect of a large number of staff changes over the last two years, and have established a teaching team which provides good-quality education throughout the school.

The large number of staffing changes over the last two years has interfered with your work to fully address the areas for improvement identified in the school's previous inspection work. Although the school has incorporated the improvements to teaching and the use of assessment in the development plan, you and other leaders recognise that further work is needed to help pupils identify how to improve their work in reading and mathematics.

Parents and carers hold the school and its staff in high esteem. All parents who

responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to others. Every one of the 19 parents with whom I spoke on the morning of the inspection regard the school very highly. Many commented on the welcoming family atmosphere and how much their children enjoy school. The school's consistent track record of above-average attendance bears this out.

Pupils told me they are happy at school and they are also proud of their school. They behave very well in lessons and around school. Their good manners and mature behaviour, and the trust they place in adults, means that the school is a happy place. They find learning interesting and exciting. Year 6 pupils told me how much they were enjoying their current topic on the Second World War. The curriculum is lively and interesting, and many pupils spoke with me with great enthusiasm about the way in which staff use the excellent outdoor areas to enhance learning. They told me that everyone is kind to one another and they all get on. A typical comment was that 'If ever there is a 'fall-out', it doesn't last long.' All pupils reported that they felt safe in school and many younger pupils saw the older pupils as helpers and said how well they looked after them. I saw a great deal of evidence of pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development during my day in the school.

I was impressed by the understanding of British values shown by the Year 6 pupils with whom I spoke, such as tolerance and fair play. They have done some useful work on such issues as racism and they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They also show good understanding of issues such as diversity and inclusion.

Following disappointing results in 2016 and 2017, you made improving the quality of writing a whole-school priority and this work has borne fruit. Writing is well taught, and pupils are making good progress in their writing. The much-improved national assessment results for Year 6 pupils in 2018 exemplify the improvements that have been made. Results attained by seven-year-olds in national assessments in 2018 were also much better than in the previous year. One improvement was in the high proportion of pupils who attained greater depth in their reading. Expectations have clearly risen in school this year. These results also reflect the effective way reading is taught throughout the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a very strong commitment to safeguarding evident throughout the school. There are clear and effective procedures for raising any concerns and these are followed up thoroughly. Both you and the governors, particularly the safeguarding lead governor, show expertise in understanding how to keep children safe in school. All leaders are rigorous in checking that all safeguarding procedures are fully met and are fit for purpose. Training in safeguarding is comprehensive and up to date. You know the pupils and their families very well and you ensure that the school provides good-quality pastoral support to meet individual children's needs.

### **Inspection findings**

- Children do well from their starting points in the Reception Year. They benefit from the high-quality learning environment which you have created, both indoors and outside. The recent improvements further enhance the early years area. The relaxed and homely environment and the effective induction arrangements help the youngest children to settle quickly. Children work well with each other and enjoy their activities. They benefit from an interesting curriculum and good-quality teaching and clearly enjoy school.
- Pupils' attainment in key stage 1 is improving. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is in line with the national averages. An important improvement in 2018 was in the proportion of seven-year-old pupils who attained greater depth, particularly in their reading.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6, in writing, was below average in 2016 and 2017, but improved well in 2018 to average levels. Pupils' current work and school records show that pupils currently in key stage 2 are attaining in line with age-related expectations in all subjects, and some are attaining above these.
- The main reason that standards are once again rising, after a period of some decline in key stage 2, is that after a period of staffing instability, you have now established an effective teaching team that is providing good-quality teaching and learning throughout the school. You are aware that your work to ensure that pupils have a clear view of where they need to focus their efforts to move their learning forward has been slowed due to staffing changes. Pupils often gave over-generalised answers when I asked them about which aspect of their writing and mathematics they were working to improve.
- The school's interesting curriculum, which is suitably modified to provide appropriate challenge for all learners, captures pupils' interests and stimulates them to want to learn. Every pupil with whom I spoke showed great confidence in all adults in the school and knew they were kept safe and were looked after well. It is not surprising that quite a large proportion of parents travel some distance to bring their children to the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching, learning and the use of assessment are further improved, especially in writing and mathematics, by helping pupils to be clear about where they need to focus their efforts to improve particular aspects of their work.

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

Roger Sadler  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Before and during the inspection I analysed the performance of the school in comparison with other schools nationally. During the inspection, I evaluated the school's own records of pupils' attainment and progress. The headteacher and I jointly observed teaching and learning in all classes. I also looked at past and current work of pupils of different abilities, and compared pupils' work with the school's assessment records. A meeting was held with two members of the governing body and a telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. I also spent time with the headteacher and the school's strategic development partner. I analysed documents, including plans for the school's improvement and reports showing the school's view of its own performance. I looked at recent reports provided on the school's effectiveness by the local authority and the school's strategic development partner. I evaluated the school's website. Safeguarding documents, policies and records relating to pupils' personal development, behaviour, welfare and safety, and attendance, were inspected. I took account of the 18 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 25 responses to the school's survey of parents' views, which took place last June. I also spoke with 19 parents of 29 pupils as they brought their children to school. Pupils' views were gathered through a pre-arranged meeting and informally around the school.