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Ms Helen Okrafo-Smart  
Interim Executive Headteacher  
Nocton Community Primary School  
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Nocton  
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LN4 2BJ

Dear Ms Okrafo-Smart

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

Following my visit to the school on 3 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.

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.**

Over the past three years, pupils have not made the progress that they were capable of by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. The quality of teaching is not good enough to enable pupils to make consistently good progress. You and your team have recognised that pupils' progress has not been as good as it should have been.

Since your appointment in September, you have worked swiftly to identify what the school must do to improve. You have introduced whole-school systems which allow you to identify those pupils who are failing to make the progress they should. You are also developing the teachers' skills so that they understand how to plan learning that will challenge pupils.

During the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve links with parents of children in the Reception class, so that they are better able to support their children. The school has worked successfully to ensure that parents and carers are now active partners in their children's learning. A new online system allows parents to view their children's work. There are regular opportunities for parents to visit their child's classroom, and staff have provided support for parents so that they can help their children to improve their reading at home.

Leaders were also asked to improve teaching by ensuring that teachers set suitably challenging tasks so that pupils make stronger progress. While you have worked to ensure a greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the school since your appointment, some teachers are not yet challenging all groups of pupils. Pupils' workbooks show that some pupils are starting to make faster progress; however, this is not consistent across the school. Some pupils are still not making the progress that they are capable of.

The pupils in the school are a delight. They are articulate, well mannered and well behaved. Pupils' attitudes towards learning are positive and they concentrate on the work they are set by their teachers. Pupils told me that when behaviour is not as good as it could be, staff act quickly and fairly to apply school rules. As a consequence, bullying is very rare.

Pupils appreciate the work of adults in school, especially when they are given the opportunity to learn skills or gain new knowledge. They enjoy taking part in the variety of clubs, such as goalball and ultimate Frisbee. They speak enthusiastically about writing diary entries from the First World War trenches and when recounting the sights and smells of Victorian life when visiting a local museum. However, in some year groups, pupils say that the challenge they desire is not as consistently provided as they would prefer, and at times they find the work to be too easy.

Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the school and recognise the changes you are making. Almost all feel that you are leading and managing the school well and would recommend the school to someone else. One parent commented that she has 'always loved the school but since we have got our new headteacher, I'm starting to see the differences already'. Parents know they can speak with someone whenever they have a concern. They appreciate the little things, such as the deputy headteacher ringing families to welcome them back prior to the start of the new school year.

The governing body recognises what the school must now do to improve. Governors have asked for changes to the way you present information to show how well pupils are learning by insisting on a new focus on progress over a longer period of time. Minutes from governing body meetings show that they are beginning to challenge school leaders to ensure that the school continues to improve.

The local authority is beginning to provide the support the school needs to bring rapid improvement. Working in partnership with school governors, local authority officers have identified and appointed you as a proven and successful interim executive headteacher to provide the leadership and direction the school needs.

Following this inspection, I have asked you and your team to identify if pupils are falling behind with their learning, and to put interventions in place to improve their progress. I have also asked you to improve pupils' progress in key stage 2 by setting more challenging work.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding is effective and a high priority for everyone in the school. Staff have been trained well and are able to identify concerns and know how to report them. The governing body takes its safeguarding role very seriously and checks that systems to ensure the safety of pupils are maintained regularly.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school as they know they can talk to someone if they are ever worried about something. Staff teach them how to protect themselves from risks, including when using the internet or a mobile device. Although the school is not a very diverse community, pupils have great respect for cultures and faiths other than their own.

## **Inspection findings**

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good enough to enable all pupils to make the progress that they are capable of. Furthermore, teachers have not identified pupils who are falling behind quickly enough. Consequently, interventions to improve pupils' progress have not been implemented in a timely manner.
- You have introduced a new system which will allow leaders to check how much progress pupils are making over time. You have also appointed consultants to support teachers to measure pupils' learning more accurately. However, there has been little time for these new systems to have had an impact.
- You and other leaders are in the process of reviewing the school curriculum. You have introduced new systems to help teachers to plan learning in English and mathematics. Teachers are beginning to use these systems. However, they have not had time to have a marked impact on the progress that pupils are making, particularly in key stage 2.
- From the beginning of this academic year, you have restructured classes so that children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are now taught in one class. This has begun to provide pupils with greater consistency and challenge.
- In key stage 2, some inconsistencies remain in the challenge that some pupils are given in the activities their teachers set for them. In some cases, the planning for these activities does not take sufficient account of what pupils already know, or identify what they must learn next to make good progress. In others, higher expectations are beginning to provide pupils with the opportunity to make stronger progress. This is because learning is carefully planned and takes greater account of what pupils already know.
- Pupils' workbooks show that they respond to feedback from their teacher to develop their skills further. Presentation in some books, although not all, is exemplary due to the high expectations of two classes. Pupils now write extended pieces in which they describe, for example, attending the Queen's garden party.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers plan challenging next steps in pupils' learning based on their knowledge of what pupils already know to enable pupils to make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics through key stage 2
- assessment information is used effectively to quickly identify pupils who are not making the progress that they should, and put interventions in place to accelerate their 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 Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martin Fitzwilliam  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I visited all classes with you and the deputy headteacher to observe teaching, learning and assessment. We looked at pupils' workbooks to check the progress they are making and compared it to the progress which was made in workbooks kept from the last academic year. We discussed the school's effectiveness and the actions taken to ensure the school's improvement.

I met with leaders with responsibility for English, mathematics and sport. I spoke with two members of the local governing body and two representatives of the local authority. I also spoke with a group of staff. I met with groups of pupils and talked informally with other pupils in lessons. I met with parents on the playground at the beginning of the school day.

I looked at a range of documents, including your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the school's improvement plan. I also scrutinised the school's safeguarding systems, records and associated documents. I checked assessment information on how well pupils are achieving. I considered 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.