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1 November 2018

Mrs Jane Fitzgerald  
Headteacher  
Weston Hills CofE Primary School  
Learning Lane  
Weston Hills  
Spalding  
Lincolnshire  
PE12 6DL

Dear Mrs Fitzgerald

### **Short inspection of Weston Hills CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 16 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 January 2015.

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.**

You are aspirational for the school and determined to realise future improvements and success. Your evaluation of the school is clear and comprehensive. You know the school well and have accurately prioritised the areas in need of further improvements. Your plans for these improvements are clear and appropriate. However, governors are not currently effective in supporting further improvements or in holding you to account. You have recognised this and requested a governance review which is currently in process.

The school has developed an effective curriculum based on linking various subjects together and creating purposeful learning. This was evident in a Year 4/5 lesson I saw where pupils were writing a Viking myth. The pupils were enjoying applying their knowledge of the Vikings from their history lessons into their writing. Physical education is valued within the school by adults and pupils alike. The school is participating in a 'Legacy Challenge', in which pupils are trained to become ambassadors for promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. They have a secure understanding of right and wrong. They are knowledgeable about various faiths and beliefs and show compassion for others through various charitable

endeavours.

You and the staff have created a caring and inclusive culture within the school where pupils are well looked after in line with your school motto: 'Learning for life in a community that cares'. The majority of parents agree. Adult support for pupils who find different aspects of school difficult is effective. Parents whom I spoke with and who responded to the survey were highly appreciative of the school's work to support their children. The learning mentor in school liaises well with outside agencies to support the varying needs of pupils.

Pupils are happy to come to school and overall attendance has been above national figures for at least the past three years. The vast majority of parents spoken with before school told me that their children love coming to school because of the 'energised environment' and 'friendly teachers'.

At the previous inspection you were asked to increase the opportunities for teachers to share best practice and learn from good practice elsewhere. You ensure that you strategically plan and deliver the priorities for staff development and that teachers and teaching assistants receive well-targeted support. The school has engaged with opportunities for development through both the Kyra and Keystone teaching schools alliances. The school has also supported the development of teaching assistants through your participation in a research project with the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership.

However, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers do not yet consistently use their knowledge of prior learning to set tasks that meet the needs of all pupils. While sometimes tasks are too easy, at other times they are too difficult. Teachers' planning and feedback for pupils are not always precise enough and therefore not consistently effective in supporting learning. As a result, pupils do not all make the progress of which they are capable. The most able pupils, in particular, are not routinely set tasks that enable them to achieve greater depth in their writing. They do not have a secure understanding of how to do this.

You have started to develop the school's middle leaders, but this work is not complete. These leaders do not all have the skills to support you in making the necessary improvements you have identified.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and the governing body have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Regular training for staff and support for families create a culture of care that is evident throughout the school. Records are detailed and secure.

All parents who responded to Parent View stated that their children felt safe in school. Pupils agreed and were keen to tell me how safe they felt in school. They used words such as 'welcoming', 'friendly' and 'enjoyable' to describe their school.

Pupils understand what bullying is. They told me that it is 'not tolerated' and that rare instances are quickly and effectively dealt with by trusted adults in school. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They like the role the 'mini police' have in school, who work alongside the local police community support officers to monitor such things as safe parking outside the school gates.

### **Inspection findings**

- Following your previous inspection, pupils' overall progress by the end of key stage 2 has remained average. However, there has been a decline in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standard in writing and spelling, punctuation and grammar. There has also been a decline in the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 1. You have rightly identified these curriculum areas as priorities for improvement and have taken actions to improve them. However, it is too early to measure the impact of your actions.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve a good level of development has declined since the previous inspection. You have identified this and put appropriate measures in place for improvement. This is in its early stages and the impact has yet to be measured. The local authority is currently providing support through moderation, which you have welcomed.
- Writing across the school was a key priority for the school in the last academic year. The school's curriculum design now emphasises purposeful writing, with links with other subjects. This allows more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in various meaningful ways. You identified that actions for improvement needed to begin with children in the early years. Activities to develop their fine motor skills were implemented to improve pencil grip. You are starting to see some impact of the actions to improve pupils' writing skills, but this impact is not consistent across the school.
- Pupils say that they enjoy lessons and that teachers support their learning well. However, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough. This is particularly true of the most able pupils in writing and spelling, grammar and punctuation. Too often, pupils are provided with the same activity despite their prior knowledge or ability. Activities aimed to further pupils' learning are not sufficiently challenging. As a result, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standard has declined.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they develop further the skills of middle leaders so that these leaders take responsibility for improving teaching in their areas
- all teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve
- all teachers use pupils' prior knowledge to set tasks which match the ability of all

pupils

- there is an increase in the proportion of pupils who achieve greater depth at key stage 1 and the higher standard at key stage 2 in writing by ensuring that the most able pupils are given more challenging tasks.

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

Yours sincerely

Heidi Malliff  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and the assistant headteacher and shared my key lines of inquiry. I also met with a representative from the local authority, two members of the governing body, two middle leaders, your family support worker and a number of parents at the start of the school day. I considered the 21 responses of parents from Parent View and spoke to several parents at the start of the school day. We visited all classes in the school, spending a short time in each, and looked at a sample of pupils' work. I viewed a range of documents, including an evaluation of the school's performance and plans for further improvement, case studies and information regarding pupils' progress across the school.