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Ms Allie Majer
Signhills Infant Academy
Hardys Road
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North East Lincolnshire
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Dear Ms Majer

Short inspection of Signhills Infant Academy

Following my visit to the school on 13 November 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

The leadership of the school is strong. You are a dedicated leader who only wants the best for pupils at the school. You are well supported by an able leadership team and effective governing body. Together, you are relentless in your pursuit of high-quality teaching and support for all pupils to ensure that they get the very best educational start in life. This commitment to high expectations by you, school leaders and your staff has resulted in pupils attaining exceptionally high standards, consistently, since the last inspection. Year on year, pupils have achieved standards in reading, writing and mathematics that have been well above those seen nationally.

You have created a caring and nurturing ethos that places pupils at the heart of the school. Signhills Infant Academy is an inclusive school that welcomes all pupils. There is a strong sense of working together with a collegiate approach, which ensures that pupils' needs are met. Staff morale is high.

Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and where further improvements are needed. Since the last inspection, new governors have joined the board, which has strengthened their ability to provide effective challenge

and support to school leaders. Governors are well informed and knowledgeable and act as effective critical friends to you and your leaders.

At the previous inspection you were asked to accelerate the progress boys make in writing. This has been successfully achieved. The standards boys attain in writing have rapidly improved since the last inspection, especially for those who are working at a greater depth. Although there is a noticeable improvement in boys' writing, the standards they attain are below the exceptionally high outcomes that girls attain.

In your previous inspection, you were also asked to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. The proportion of pupils in the school who are disadvantaged is considerably less than most other schools and numbers can vary each year. You and your staff ensure that these pupils get the support they need, and as a result progress is improving for disadvantaged pupils currently in the school. However, you recognise that there is still work to do to improve their progress further.

Since the last inspection, you have improved considerably the outdoor learning environment in the early years. You have made good use of the space available and invested appropriately in a range of resources. Children now have access to a variety of stimulating activities, which develops their skills and knowledge in different areas of learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture to safeguard pupils at the school. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. As the designated lead for safeguarding, you are scrupulous in your procedures for keeping children safe. You ensure that staff understand and carry out their responsibilities and that nothing is left to chance. All staff receive regular updates and training about safeguarding. Consequently, they know what to do should a safeguarding issue or concern arise. Your procedures for recruiting, vetting and checking staff are thorough.

You work effectively with external agencies to ensure that everything is being done to safeguard children and that families get the support they need. Parents are confident that their children are safe and well cared for at the school.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection I wanted to establish what actions leaders have taken that has resulted in the consistently high standards pupils achieve in reading since the last inspection. You have ensured that teachers receive good-quality professional development opportunities which enable them to carefully plan challenging learning activities for pupils. Your teachers make reading lessons engaging for pupils, and they use a range of approaches to develop pupils' deeper understanding of a range of texts.
- You have also reviewed reading resources to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

Pupils now use an online system which has improved their comprehension skills considerably. Pupils who read to me used effective strategies to read unfamiliar words and they could talk confidently about what they were reading.

- Writing standards have significantly improved since the previous inspection. However, the improvement has not matched the rapid improvement seen in reading. Although standards in writing are above national averages, this is mostly because girls attain exceptionally high standards in comparison to boys.
- I also wanted to investigate whether pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive strong support. What became immediately apparent during the inspection was the thoughtful approach shown by your staff. Pupils who have specific needs receive the support they need from compassionate and caring adults. As a result, pupils with SEND currently in the school are making strong progress from their low starting points.
- My final focus for the inspection was to see what actions leaders have taken to improve the progress for disadvantaged pupils. Evidence collected during the inspection indicated that these pupils are a small and diverse group. Their needs are varied and sometimes complex, and adults work hard to ensure that their individual needs are met. However, the progress that these pupils make is sometimes not as rapid as for other pupils.
- Undoubtedly, leaders have rapidly improved outcomes since the previous inspection and evidence in pupils' books reflect this. The standards that pupils achieve in reading, writing and mathematics are exceptionally high and have been over time. During the inspection, we discussed the next steps required to enable the school to improve further. Leaders' own evaluation accurately highlights that further work is required if standards in writing for boys are to continue to improve so they match the high standards attained by girls. Leaders also acknowledged that the small proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school need to make stronger progress so they attain standards that are similar to those achieved by other pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- boys' attainment in writing continues to improve
- differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are reduced further.

I am copying this letter to chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North East Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alan Chaffey
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the subject leaders for English and mathematics and the special educational needs leader. I also met with two members of the governing body. I spoke with pupils informally during lunchtime and when listening to some pupils read. I made short visits to classrooms with you and looked at a range of pupils' books. I scrutinised various documents, including the school's self-evaluation and safeguarding documents. I considered the 32 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey, the 11 responses to the staff survey, the 22 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and 21 free-text responses to Parent View. I also spoke to a parent who asked to see me.