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15 May 2019

Mr Simon English
Headteacher
Zetland Primary School
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Dear Mr English

Short inspection of Zetland Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 May 2019, 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Zetland Primary is a welcoming school with a vibrant, caring and inclusive learning environment. You have successfully built a strong team of senior and middle leaders and, together, you lead the school effectively. All staff say that they are highly motivated because they feel valued and trusted by senior leaders. Staff say that they are proud to work at the school and their morale is high. This teamwork, together with strong governance, is central to the success of this school.

Since the school joined the Ironstone Multi-Academy Trust in October 2016, you have appreciated the collaborative working and sharing of expertise that this allows. You have skilfully ensured that the unique aspects of your school, which are important to you, remain. This includes the creative curriculum, which is highly valued by pupils. One pupil commented: 'We get to learn exciting things and go places that some children would never go – like London and Edinburgh. Every day is full of fun and exciting learning.'

Almost all of the senior and middle leaders are new to their leadership roles since the previous inspection. You have invested in their high-quality training and their joint leadership development across the multi-academy trust. As a result, they regularly check on the progress of pupils and provide a balance of support and challenge to further develop the quality of teaching across the school.

Pupils are immensely proud of their school. They speak with high regard of the 'amazing teachers', 'friends who care' and the pride they feel when they achieve well in their learning. Pupils relish the range of roles and responsibilities that are available to them. They talk enthusiastically about being a school councillor, a sports leader, a playtime buddy or a fruit monitor. They say that having such roles helps them to make school a better place and they learn skills on how to lead and help other people.

The vast majority of parents and carers are highly supportive of the school. Parents describe the school as 'a big family', 'welcoming', 'caring' and 'exceptional in the way they positively manage children, their learning and behaviour'. Parents say that they are confident that their children are prepared well for moving to secondary school. They also appreciate the breakfast club and the wide range of after-school clubs provided by the school. One parent commented: 'I feel that the school is committed to giving the best education, but also importantly, to giving the best overall school experience they can.'

At the previous inspection, you were asked to strengthen the quality of teaching. You have tackled this successfully and the quality of teaching and learning is now highly effective. Inspectors also asked you to ensure that the most able children in the early years, and those in key stage 1, are set work that will challenge and extend their understanding in mathematics and writing. You have ensured that teachers provide all pupils with greater challenge in these subjects. As a result, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards in both of these key stages have improved over time. However, although the most able pupils currently in school are making strong progress, the proportions of children exceeding the early learning goals at the end of Reception and pupils attaining the higher standards at the end of key stage 1 in 2018 were below the national averages.

The local governing body is responsible for the strategic development of the school. Governors are committed to the school, bringing a wide range of skills and talents to their roles. Governors understand the importance of checking on the progress of pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Governors have received a wide range of training to support them in their roles, including safeguarding training. Governors understand their legal duties, and this helps them to carry out their roles effectively.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. You ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Effective recording systems are in place for the recruitment of staff and these systems are checked regularly by governors.

As the designated safeguarding lead, you, and your deputy safeguarding leads, have established effective systems to record, and deal with, any concerns about pupils. Staff have a clear understanding of these systems and follow them appropriately. This is because they receive comprehensive training and regular

updates. As a result, vulnerable pupils and their families are supported effectively.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and they talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They say that bullying rarely occurs and, if it did, they are confident that adults will deal with it. One pupil commented that bullying is rare because the rules are clear, but also because 'No-one wants to disappoint the teachers.' Staff, and the vast majority of parents, are confident that children are safe in school. One parent stated, 'I feel the school is very safe and brings out the best in pupils.'

Inspection findings

- You, other leaders and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is because, since the last inspection, you have developed leaders' roles in improving the quality of teaching and learning. You make sure that additional funding received supports disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Leaders' detailed plans identify barriers for learning for these pupil groups, and the actions taken match their needs well. As a result, current pupils in these pupil groups are making strong progress.
- Since the last inspection, attainment at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics, at the expected standard, has been above the national average. In 2018, pupils' attainment at the higher standard in these subjects was average. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher standard by the end of Year 2 or exceeding the early learning goals by the end of Reception were below the national averages. Increasing the proportions of pupils attaining the higher standard by the end of Year 2 and children exceeding the early learning goals by the end of Reception is a priority in your current school development plan. You and other leaders check regularly that teachers provide appropriate challenge for all groups of pupils. Inspection evidence shows that this is leading to an improved proportion of pupils currently working within the greater depths of learning across all key stages. However, on occasion, some pupils, including those who are most able, are given work which they already know or can do. This limits the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standards, particularly by the end of key stage 1.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check dipped to be below the national average. Your English leader took steps to remedy this issue and successfully improved the quality of teaching and assessment of phonics in key stage 1. The proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in 2018 improved and was in line with the national average. Pupils in key stage 1 can apply their phonics knowledge and skills to read and write. They are adept at decoding words because they practise using fully decodable books, which boosts their confidence as strong readers. However, when reading, the most able pupils can sometimes decode the words but do not know the meaning of complex words and phrases. This then limits the range of words that pupils know to use in their writing. This is preventing some most-able pupils from reaching the higher standards in reading and writing by the end of key stage 1.

- In 2018, pupils' rates of progress through key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were average. We spent time during the inspection looking at the progress that all groups of pupils make. In lessons, we observed pupils building upon the knowledge and skills that they had previously learned to tackle new or deeper learning. Inspection evidence, scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own assessment information demonstrate that the rates of progress of pupils currently in school have improved.
- Pupils' attendance has been broadly average over time. The attendance of current pupils, however, has fallen and is below last year's national average. You pay close attention to pupils' attendance and you have established structured systems to improve it. You and your staff, rightly, place high priority on ensuring that pupils attend school as regularly as possible. Some improvements are evident compared to last year. For example, the current attendance of girls and pupils with SEND has improved. However, the attendance rates of other pupil groups, such as boys and disadvantaged pupils, have declined. The current proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has increased. Parents who take their children out of school on holidays during term time contribute significantly to pupils' attendance being below the national average. You and your staff are working closely with families to resolve this issue.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportions of children exceeding the early learning goals at the end of Reception and pupils attaining the higher standards at the end of Year 2 continue to improve to be at least in line with the national averages
- pupils in key stage 1, particularly those who are most able, develop a wide range of vocabulary to improve their reading comprehension and their writing
- they improve pupils' attendance to be at least in line with the national average, including reducing the number of holidays that families take in term time.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Redcar and Cleveland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alison Aitchison
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, senior and middle

leaders, the early help leader from Ironstone Education Trust and members of the governing body. I also held a telephone conversation with the acting chief executive officer of the trust. I observed learning during lessons and conducted learning walks in every class across the school with you. During lessons, I spoke with pupils and looked at their books. I spoke with pupils informally when I observed behaviour at breaktime. I met formally with pupils from Years 1 to 6 to discuss their learning and their views of the school. I listened to four pupils read. I also examined a sample of pupils' mathematics and writing books. I examined a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, including the single central register. I scrutinised 24 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Parent View, including responses to Ofsted's free-text service. I considered the 13 responses to the staff survey and 25 responses to the pupil survey. I examined the school's website and reviewed information about pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. I also considered the school's self-evaluation of how well it is doing, its improvement priorities and its assessment information for current pupils.