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Mr Andrew Sewell
Mrs Mary King's CofE (Controlled) Primary School
Moor Lane
Martin
Lincoln
Lincolnshire
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Dear Mr Sewell

Short inspection of Mrs Mary King's CofE (Controlled) Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 January 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. You, with the support of the governing body, have been determined to ensure that the school continues to improve.

The caring ethos in your school is a thread running through all aspects of school life. There is a culture of mutual respect. Behaviour is good and pupils are proud of their school and their learning. They show respect and consideration for each other and their teachers. Pupils in Year 6 said that teachers have a good sense of humour, but they 'also know when to be serious'. The majority of parents spoke very positively of the school's approachable staff, its supportive and caring ethos and the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. They said that their children enjoy coming to school.

You have successfully tackled many of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Pupils achieve well in mathematics. Teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to use their reasoning skills and solve interesting problems. These opportunities, particularly evident in key stage 1, challenge pupils and deepen their understanding. The majority of pupils, including the most able, are making good progress in mathematics.

Children in Reception join in enthusiastically with activities. There are many opportunities in the indoor and outdoor learning areas to promote their communication and language skills. For example, I observed children chatting and sharing ideas while happily exploring an ice tray 'Antarctic environment' created by the teacher. Pupils confidently talked to me about what they were doing, the lives

of animals, and the sensations of the experience. This was just one example of the imaginative range of activities that are key to the good progress that the children make in their first year at school.

In 2017, pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2 were above the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics. However, lower down the school, outcomes were not as positive. For example, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below the national average. Pupils' outcomes were also below average in the reading and writing assessments made at the end of Year 2. You and other staff have introduced a range of initiatives to improve standards. You have introduced regular writing tasks to supplement the teaching of reading and early writing. You are working to develop pupils' wider reading. You and your staff have placed emphasis on helping pupils understand how their reading skills are linked to improving writing. The impact of this work was evident in the improved quality of pupils' work.

The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths. Governors know where it should improve further. Leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and plans for improvement accurately identify the key actions to bring these improvements about. The governing body is active in supporting the school and committed to driving further improvement. However, the information it receives about pupils' performance lacks sufficient detail and rigorous evaluation. This limits the governing body's awareness of precisely how well pupils are doing. This means that governors are not currently able to hold leaders to account for some aspects of the school's effectiveness.

Safeguarding is effective.

Your school has a strong culture of safeguarding. You have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Any concerns that are reported by staff are followed up swiftly. The school's single central record and recruitment processes are thorough. Staff receive relevant and up-to-date training. The governing body is aware of its responsibilities. Governors visit the school to check safeguarding arrangements.

The school has a positive and friendly atmosphere. Pupils are confident that adults will help them if needed and they say that they feel safe. You and the other staff take pride in knowing each pupil well. Leaders take timely action when they have any concerns about pupils' well-being. Pupils say that they feel safe and bullying is very rare. The very large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, or who spoke with me say that the school keeps children safe. Pupils themselves speak with good knowledge about how to keep safe, including when online.

Inspection findings

- School information and pupils' current work show that the majority of pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' work shows

the clear impact of leaders' and teachers' work to improve standards in mathematics. Teachers use visual imagery and apparatus well to develop pupils' mathematical understanding. Typically, pupils' work also shows the positive impact of work to promote their problem-solving and reasoning skills. This is not, however, consistently strong in all classes.

- Teachers are skilled and enthusiastic. They have good subject knowledge, which they use well to ask questions which promote pupils' thinking and to plan lessons that meet the needs of the pupils. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils' progress.
- The leader of the early years ensures that indoor and outdoor learning areas are well organised and provide children with a broad range of opportunities across the different areas of learning. As a result, the majority of children make good progress from their starting points.
- The teaching of phonics is well organised to meet pupils' needs. Leaders recognise the importance of securing pupils' early reading skills as rapidly as possible. Teaching engages and motivates pupils. Sometimes, however, teachers do not ensure that pupils have a secure and accurate understanding of sounds and how to use them. Across the school, expectations of pupils' accuracy of spelling and punctuation are also not consistently high.
- Leaders and staff know their pupils very well. However, they do not analyse sharply the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils and in different subjects. This prevents them from setting focused targets for improvement. It also hinders the governing body's ability to hold leaders to account in some areas where improvement is needed.
- Relationships are very positive. Teachers create a purposeful atmosphere for learning that is reflected in pupils' behaviour and dispositions. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and school life.

Next steps for the school

Leaders should ensure that:

- they analyse and report on the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils more effectively so that they can set challenging targets for improvement and enable the governing body to hold them to account for the achievement of all groups
- the teaching of phonics and early reading enables pupils to learn and use sounds accurately and so help all pupils make rapid progress in reading and writing.

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

John Lawson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector met with the headteacher and three members of the governing body. The inspector spoke with parents at the beginning of the day. He met with pupils informally as well as with a group of pupils. The inspector visited four lessons to observe the teaching of phonics, jointly with the headteacher. During these visits, the inspector looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils to evaluate the quality of their learning. He also examined their work in a sample of pupils' books with the headteacher. The inspector scrutinised a variety of documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' attainment and progress, staff performance and leaders' plans for improvement. He considered the 28 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The inspector assessed the impact of leaders' actions taken since the last inspection as well as additional lines of enquiry.