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Ms Helen Stamp  
Executive Headteacher  
Dove Holes CofE Primary School  
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Dear Ms Stamp

### **Short inspection of Dove Holes CofE 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 January 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

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

The school has sustained important strengths in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils, which were noted at the last inspection. The pupils behave well and the staff know the pupils very well. The pupils are well mannered, caring and friendly. They have a good sense of curiosity, so they want to learn and find out about things.

The school is very inclusive. The school's curriculum has been designed carefully to provide the pupils with a broad range of experiences, including for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Typically, the pupils attend school regularly. Recently, the attendance rates at the school have been affected by some unavoidable long-term absences.

The staff and the senior leaders have worked well together to improve the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The senior leaders increased the extent to which they have checked on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, recording detailed observations. They have made good use of a local network of schools to provide the staff with useful training and development opportunities. The result is an open culture at the school, in which the staff reflect on their teaching and are keen to improve.

For example, the school has worked well with other schools and the local authority to improve the assessments of the pupils' learning. The senior leaders have ensured that the teachers' assessments have been validated by professionals from outside of the school, including at key stage 2. As a result, the teachers are able to identify the pupils' knowledge and skills accurately. The leaders have been less effective in analysing and evaluating the impact on the pupils' progress of the things that the school does.

The relationships between the staff and the pupils are strong. As a result, the pupils respond very well to the teachers and work hard in lessons. The work that they are given captures their interest and the high-quality relationships help to sustain their concentration.

The school has experienced some difficulties putting into practice some of the changes in the national curriculum and assessment approaches. This is reflected in the figures for the pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 2. Although you joined the school only six days prior to this inspection, you are very aware of the figures and are already taking appropriate action to bring about improvements.

In particular, the teachers are still getting to grips with what is needed to enable the pupils to develop mastery in mathematics. The senior leaders have ensured that improving the teaching of mathematics has been given a high priority this year. The teaching focuses much more now on developing the pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills. I found evidence of improved and effective practice, but not consistently.

The figures for the pupils' achievement at key stage 2 have been affected also in recent years by a small number of pupils in this very small school who, for a variety of significant reasons, almost reached, but did not quite reach, the expected standard in the national tests. Some of these pupils have not understood fully what they needed to do in the tests to show all that they have learned.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is at the core of the school's ethos and of its ways of working. The governing body stresses the importance of safeguarding and keeps a careful oversight of the school's work. The school works well with a variety of external agencies to support any pupils who may need additional help.

The pupils feel safe at the school. They are taught ways in which to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet, or when walking by, or crossing, the very busy major road next to which the school is located. Misbehaviour is unusual and serious misbehaviour is very rare.

## **Inspection findings**

- Well-planned and skilful teaching ensures that the children make a good start in the early years. That start is built upon effectively in key stage 1.
- The pupils, quickly, become confident readers. They are not fazed by unusual words. For example, they used their knowledge of phonics without prompting to work out how to say the word 'Majesty's' when reading my identification badge.
- At all key stages, the teachers ask pertinent questions and teach the pupils the appropriate vocabulary to be able to explain their answers, including in mathematics lessons. The questions are devised carefully and make the pupils think. The teachers often ask supplementary questions which challenge the pupils more.
- The staff keep a close check on and detailed records of the learning needs and progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. At Dove Holes, the pupils who are part of one of these groups are usually simultaneously part of the other. These pupils are provided with a carefully selected range of additional help, including specialist services, when needed.
- You exploit the flexibilities afforded by being a very small school well. This means that the pupils are able to work easily alongside others who may be older or younger than themselves, when the teacher's assessments show that this would be beneficial for the pupils' learning.
- The teachers assess the pupils' work thoroughly and accurately. They keep detailed records of the things that the pupils have learned and the things that they still need to learn, or have not done very well.
- The pupils in key stage 2 are not given enough precise guidance consistently about how best to explain and to demonstrate what they have learned. This includes information about what they need to do better and how they might do so.
- The school does not evaluate the impact of the work that it does rigorously enough, particularly in relation to disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and pupils who join the school part-way through their education.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teachers develop the skills fully to enable the pupils to develop mastery in mathematics, so that the pupils understand, can explain and can demonstrate what they have learned, including in formal test situations
- the senior leaders evaluate incisively the impact of the school's work, particularly in relation to disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and pupils who join the school part way through their education.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education

for the Diocese of Derby, the regional schools commissioner, and the director of children's services for Derbyshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior staff at the school, the former headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the mathematics leader, and the designated leader for safeguarding. I met with the key stage 2 teaching staff. I met with members of the governing body. I made visits to lessons in all classes, jointly with you. I discussed the work of the school with the pupils during lessons and on other occasions. I looked at examples of the pupils' work during lessons and reviewed examples of their workbooks. I looked at the views of parents expressed using Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and at the results of parental surveys carried out by the school. I scrutinised various documents, including safeguarding records, a range of policy documents, a self-evaluation report and improvement plans, examples of records and support plans for individual pupils, the latest attendance figures for the school, and your records of checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. I discussed by telephone the school's work to improve itself with representatives from the local authority and the diocese.