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Mrs Lynda Cavanagh  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Cavanagh

### **Short inspection of Messingham Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 30 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 December 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You know the school well. You have made sure that through the period of changes in staffing and national expectations, you have maintained an honest and accurate view of what is working well and what needs improvement. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is at least in line with the national average at the end of each key stage, and often better, but you are rightly determined to improve the average progress that pupils make across their time in key stage 2. Teachers plan lessons carefully to engage pupils and support them in taking their next steps across the curriculum. Pupils display good attitudes to learning and many are very happy and confident to discuss their work and ideas. Their attendance is consistently better than that of other pupils nationally.

At the last inspection, you were asked to tackle the teaching that required improvement to speed up the rate of pupils' progress and raise their achievement. Leaders' continued direction to improve teaching is resulting in most approaches and systems being used consistently and successfully by teachers across the school. For example, pupils across the school receive clear direction about the next steps they need to take in their learning, which improves the progress they are making.

Pupils' productivity is high across the curriculum. Teachers teach subject-specific skills and give pupils opportunities to apply their writing and mathematics skills to their work in other subjects. Teachers model examples of tasks well across the

curriculum, and most pupils successfully edit and improve their work. In addition, the very clear direction that leaders are giving to teachers in helping pupils develop mastery skills in mathematics is starting to pay off. Pupils of all abilities have opportunities to test out their skills through problem solving and reasoning challenges that are well matched to their needs. As a result, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 compares favourably to the national averages. You have rightly identified that some pupils make slower progress once they have left Reception. You know that you need to continue to guide teachers in supporting pupils of all abilities in making strides in their learning, and in making accurate assessments of pupils' learning and progress. This is particularly important as most teachers either are teaching a new year group this year, or are new to teaching.

Pupils I spoke to in lessons and meetings were positive about their school and their learning. They shared their views of some of the 'best bits', such as the mathematics lessons they take part in outside and 'Welly Week', when they worked outdoors, learning about gardening and wild life and taking part in physical activities. They know that their learning is helping to prepare them for their futures.

School leaders and governors are confident about the support they receive from the local authority. Visits from the school improvement partner are productive and support the school in being focused on the right priorities. Staff and governors can explain the positive effect that the local authority training has on their work. Pupils spoke highly about the opportunities they have had to be part of the local authority reading project, including work with an author. Pupils were excited about the upcoming visit to meet the illustrator of the same books, and one girl said it had confirmed her ambition to become an author.

Governance is strong. The governing body has, in their own words, moved on from 'being a group that praised and rubber stamped leaders' work'. Evidence of their work shows that their improved knowledge and skills ensure that they provide tightly focused challenge and support. Through the varied information they are given and gather themselves, they make sure that the right priorities are identified for improvement and that school leaders' resulting actions are taking place swiftly and having a positive effect.

Parents and carers I spoke to during the inspection were positive about the school. Overall, in Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, the proportions who responded positively to questions such as, 'My child is happy', 'My child is safe', 'My child is making good progress', are high. However, comments in the Parent View texts were more mixed. After communication with parents was raised as an area for improvement at the last inspection, leaders have taken a number of actions to consider the views of parents and involve them in their child's learning. For example, they run a regular parent council to give parents the opportunity to talk about strengths of the school and aspects they think can be improved. After each meeting, the minutes are sent to all parents so that they can see the content and results of discussions. Leaders seek parents' views through questionnaires and discussions. When I spoke to governors, they gave an example of a change that is

taking place in the timing of sharing pupils' progress information in relation to parents' evening, in direct response to suggestions from parents. Leaders are keen to continue to improve the partnerships they have with parents. They know that they need to continue to find effective ways of communicating the strengths of the school and the improvements they are working on.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have made sure that everyone understands that safeguarding is their responsibility. All adults in school are clear about how to spot any concerns and how to report them. Record-keeping and the systems for monitoring and addressing concerns are fit for purpose. All checks on procedures for adults working in the school have been carried out. The school business manager and I discussed how the ways that the checks are recorded could be improved on. These improvements to recording were all carried out before I left the school.

Pupils are taught how to keep safe, and all those I spoke to said they feel safe. They particularly mentioned a member of staff who checks in on their class a couple of times a week, and is available at lunchtime every day to support and resolve any problems with friendships or bullying. Leaders have reviewed the anti-bullying and behaviour policy, and included additional information after consulting with the local authority so that every child is well supported in any issues that may arise.

Governors' understanding of and checking of safeguarding arrangements are strong. They understand the importance of testing out leaders' work to build a culture of safeguarding. As well as receiving information from school leaders, they regularly meet with different staff and pupils to check their knowledge and understanding of the systems and procedures that are there to keep everyone safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, I wanted to find out how well pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported. Historically, the school has had lower than the national proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, but the school's self-evaluation and pupils' current work and assessment information show an increase in the number of pupils who have different needs. The lead teacher for SEN has good subject knowledge. She has put in place clear plans and systems that are understood by everyone, to check the progress pupils are making and the support and direction they need next to improve. She knows that this is essential for this group of pupils, as their starting points are often below the national age-related expectations. Teaching assistants give strong support to pupils, liaising closely with the teachers about the pupils' progress and what they need to do next. Good support is given in class and in small focused activities that take place in the learning spaces outside of classrooms. These are a part of the school's normal routine, and sessions run smoothly and are positive and relaxed, but with clear objectives and expectations. A variety of training and support is in place to make sure that staff are confident in supporting pupils who have specific needs. This work is

supporting many pupils in making better progress, but leaders accurately identify that there is more work to be done to ensure that every pupil is making the best progress possible. The new assessment system is in its infancy. While the lead teacher for SEN is making timely checks on pupils' learning in class and in their recorded work, she is clear that more refinement is needed in how teachers assess pupils' progress across the year.

- Leaders have a good understanding of the needs of disadvantaged pupils, their starting points and any barriers they may have to their learning. They have used the pupil premium funding successfully to put additional support or activities in place to support each pupil's needs. Many of these are supporting pupils' better rates of progress in English. For example, each pupil has a buddy to read with and regular opportunities to read aloud to an adult. Support is tailored to developing pupils' emotional and behavioural needs as well as those that are academic. As a result, the vast majority of pupils are making good progress and have caught up or are catching up with other pupils nationally by the time they leave school.
- Strong leadership in the early years, fostering high expectations and a safe and nurturing culture, results in children making strong progress throughout Reception. Adults have created an environment that provides many opportunities for children to explore and apply their early mathematical and literacy skills. For example, during my visit, children were writing letters in glitter with wands as part of their work about Cinderella. Some were setting up a tournament for later in the day, recording information and counting. Others were accessing resources in the investigation shed, such as maps, so that they could go on an imaginary trip. Stimulating activities and resources that are carefully planned by adults inspire the children's confidence and imagination. The children go about their work and play confidently, chatting eagerly to each other about the activities they are taking part in. Phonics is taught systematically and modelled well by adults who pick up and address any misconceptions quickly. Adults immediately relate the sounds the children learn to spelling and writing, and, consequently, children quickly show confidence in attempting to write words and sentences.
- Leaders' vision of making Messingham a reading school is starting to be realised. Leaders have carefully re-evaluated the provision in place to help pupils improve their reading skills and develop a purposeful, lifelong value of books. They have taken into account pupils' views of reading, giving them sustained periods to develop fluency without being interrupted by questioning and increased opportunities to read aloud with friends. Pupils are motivated to make their way along the team-reading racetrack in the hall. Teachers inspire them with creative ways to check inference and the author's intention. For example, during my visit, pupils were listening to and studying the lyrics of popular songs to surmise the songwriter's subject and intent. A positive start has been made. Leaders know that they need to continue this work to ensure that, through their enjoyment and the clear direction they receive, pupils' progress in reading continues to improve.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers' assessments against age-related expectations are accurate, and checked carefully by leaders, to ensure that the progress made and next steps to be taken are accurately identified for all pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities
- the progress that pupils of all abilities are making throughout the school continues to improve from their strong outcomes at the end of Reception.

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

Yours sincerely

Kate Rowley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, you and I met to discuss your school self-evaluation, the priorities you have identified for improvement and the progress and effect of any actions you are taking. We observed the progress pupils are making, in their lessons and in their work. I met with senior and middle leaders, the school business manager and representatives from the governing body. I spoke to the local authority school improvement partner on the telephone.

I spoke to pupils about their work and their views of the school, both in lessons and in meetings. I listened to pupils read. I considered the views of the parents that I met outside before school, and of those who completed the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View. I took into account the views of staff and pupils who also completed Ofsted's online questionnaires. I scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, meetings of the governing body, external evaluations of the school and the school's assessment information.