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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mr Paul Floyd
Headteacher
North Somercotes CofE Primary School
Warren Road
North Somercotes
Louth
Lincolnshire
LN11 7QB

Dear Mr Floyd

Short inspection of North Somercotes CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 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 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.

You have ensured that pupils behave well and learn in a safe, harmonious environment. Pupils told me unanimously that incidents of bullying are extremely rare and adults quickly and fairly sort out any disagreements. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when online, riding bicycles and crossing roads. They know about faiths and cultures different from their own. They enjoy a variety of extra-curricular activities, including sport, science, art and the opportunity to learn a musical instrument.

Classrooms are busy places where pupils work hard and are engaged in learning. For example, in Year 1, pupils were enthusiastically deepening their understanding of number, using a large 100 square and number lines. They counted on and back from any given number. In Year 4, pupils were developing their vocabulary by writing what they might be able to see, hear, touch, taste and smell if they were a character in a particular photograph. One boy had proudly written, 'I can feel the crunchy snow beneath as I stomp through it in my heavy boots.'

Teaching assistants are a strength. They have developed their skills and experience through participation in the local authority's 'mobilise' project. Daily 'liaison time' with class teachers has ensured that teaching assistants are fully aware of their responsibilities for that day.

You have made an accurate evaluation of the school and are therefore well aware of the current strengths and areas for development. The enthusiastic, experienced and dedicated governing body supports you well. Governors meet with specific leaders to discuss the standard of work in pupils' books and challenge them, for example, about pupils' progress. The different governance committees work well together. The governing body reports to parents and carers termly on how it has been successful in holding you and the other leaders to account for the actions you take.

You have an effective moderation and assessment timetable. This shows precisely when different improvement activities are to take place. For example, teachers have recently met with colleagues from other schools to check assessments of pupils' work. This helps to ensure that teachers are making accurate evaluations of pupils' attainment and progress.

You have an effective system in place for teachers to track pupils' attainment and progress. Once collected, you carefully analyse this information to highlight any potential areas of weakness. You use meetings about pupils' progress successfully to identify any pupil who is falling behind. Consequently, you swiftly give these pupils the help they need to catch up. Inspection evidence and information provided by you suggest that the vast majority of pupils are currently working at age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. You do not currently have a system in place for teachers to assess attainment and track pupils' progress in other subjects. We agreed that this should be a next step in the school's development.

Over the last two years, the proportions of pupils leaving key stages 1 and 2 having reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics have been above national averages. The proportions of pupils achieving at a greater depth in these subjects have sometimes been below the national averages. Teachers do not always provide the depth of challenge in reading, writing and mathematics that pupils need so that they can reach these higher standards. Consequently, we agreed that this is a next step in raising standards further.

You have successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You were asked to use the expertise in teaching that existed in the school to bring about improvement. Teachers told me that they have recently had the opportunity to observe each other teaching and therefore share elements of good practice with each other. You were also asked to ensure that pupils had the opportunity to assess their work before handing it in. I saw many examples of pupils responding well to this. Pupils told me that they enjoy the frequent 'checking time' they are given that allows them to correct aspects of their work before it is marked by the teacher.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that checks made on adults before they are allowed to work or volunteer at the school are robust. The safeguarding governors frequently monitor this documentation to ensure that it meets requirements. Staff have received

relevant training in, for example, e-safety, the 'Prevent' duty and supporting victims of domestic violence. An effective system is in place for staff to report concerns about pupils' welfare. The 'lilac forms' are kept securely by you and you swiftly seek advice from an external agency when it is needed. Safeguarding arrangements are therefore fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- Pupils are making strong progress in key stage 1, particularly in writing. This is because teachers accurately use assessment information to plan activities that motivate and engage pupils. For example, at the start of a recent topic on significant people in history, pupils and staff were encouraged to come to school dressed as a famous historical person. At the end of the topic, parents were invited to school to listen to pupils as they presented information they had successfully researched about these famous people.
- The proportion of children leaving the early years who have achieved a good level of development has recently been above the national average. This is because staff frequently and accurately assess children in a wide range of areas of learning, including writing, number and creative activities. Parents frequently contribute to this assessment online. Consequently, staff have an accurate picture of children's next steps in learning. The experienced early years leader visits other settings to share good practice and check the accuracy of assessments. Children behave well and sustain positive relationships in the safe and stimulating environment.
- Pupils are making particularly good progress in mathematics. This is because subject leaders have recently brought in expertise from a mathematics consultant. They have also learned from attending meetings and training delivered by the East Midlands mathematics hub. In particular, pupils' ability to use number skills when solving problems and when using reasoning has improved.
- You have ensured that the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is allocated and monitored effectively. The responsible governor has a good understanding of the different ways the funding is used to help improve pupils' outcomes. You are aware of the importance of ensuring that the most able disadvantaged pupils are included when allocating this funding. Inspection evidence and assessment information provided by you indicate that disadvantaged pupils are currently achieving well.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. The vast majority responding to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, stated that their child was happy, safe and making good progress. One parent commented, 'I would recommend North Somercotes to friends for the excellent care, quality and breadth of education it offers.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers move pupils onto challenging work quickly so that more pupils achieve at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics
- teachers assess pupils' attainment and progress in a wider range of subjects.

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

Peter Stonier
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, subject leaders, the leader responsible for the early years and the chairs of the governing body's committees. I also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I visited all classrooms with you and examined a range of pupils' books. I spoke with pupils informally during lessons and during a group discussion. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, during lunchtime and in lessons.

I took into account the 36 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 17 responses to Ofsted's free-text service. I spoke with a number of parents at the start of the school day. There were no responses to Ofsted's surveys of pupils and staff. I examined a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies, records of recruitment checks, the latest assessment information, a summary of the school's self-evaluation and its improvement plan, records of meetings of the governing body and information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.