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Mrs Paula Maycock
Principal
Ingoldmells Academy
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Dear Mrs Maycock

Short inspection of Ingoldmells Academy

Following my visit to the school on 8 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since taking up your position as principal in September 2016, you and the staff have worked hard to ensure that the school provides a bright and welcoming environment, where everybody feels valued and respected. Leaders have a clear vision for the school. They have accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses and planned a suitable programme to bring about improvements. With high expectations of the pupils, yours is a school where teachers nurture pupils' aspirations to do well.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They forge positive working relationships with their peers and adults alike. Pupils know they can take risks and make mistakes in their learning. In an assembly, pupils were keen to explain that if they ask more 'Why' questions, the answers will help them to understand their work and make more progress. Pupils know how to behave during lessons and social time. They respond promptly to staff requests. The school atmosphere is calm and orderly. Staff who responded to their Ofsted survey all agreed that pupils' behaviour is good and managed well.

Leaders provide pupils with a rich curriculum, including 'memorable experiences' beyond the classroom and 'home challenges' to share with parents. Pupils learn about faiths and cultures different to their own. For example, pupils I spoke with were able to describe the five pillars of Islam. Pupils also enjoy the wide range of

extra-curricular opportunities, including choir, cookery, sports and gardening. Pupils are keen to take on leadership roles, for example organising charity events as a member of the school council or being a young leader of positive play in the playground. Leaders have created a supportive school environment, where pupils in assembly have the confidence to answer the question 'Why is it good to be me?'

Parents who I spoke with, and those who responded to Ofsted's and the school's own surveys, are very positive about the school. They would recommend the school to others. One parent commented that, since starting at the school, their children have come on 'in leaps and bounds in all aspects of their school work'. Parents value the regular communication with their children's teachers. They also appreciate how approachable you are as the principal. A number of parents praised the support that leaders offer children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. As one parent put it, 'The school has wonderful teachers who nurture children's needs based on their requirements.' Through events such as coffee mornings and parent workshops, leaders have successfully increased parental engagement with school. As a result, pupils' attendance and progress have improved.

Leaders from the academy trust provide school leaders with significant support. Trust leaders have a clear understanding of the school's priorities. They agree challenging termly targets with school leaders, leading to improvements in current pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers value the opportunities to improve their professional practice through training provided by the trust. This has particularly benefited staff new to leadership positions, allowing them to carry out their roles more successfully.

At the last inspection, inspectors asked leaders to make effective use of the support available from teaching assistants. All teaching assistants have received training on delivering successful pupil interventions. This training enables them to provide effective additional teaching for pupils to help them improve their language and writing skills. Teaching assistants also work effectively with individual pupils, asking appropriate questions to help develop their understanding of a text so they make more rapid progress.

Inspectors also asked leaders to make sure that all staff have the skills needed to teach phonics effectively. Pupils' outcomes in the phonics screening check have been below the national average in the past three years and declined further in 2017. Leaders have introduced new phonics resources. Staff now consistently deliver more closely focused phonics sessions to small groups of pupils. Pupils respond positively to opportunities to segment and blend new sounds. They then practise using these sounds in their written work. An increased proportion of pupils, including pupils who are disadvantaged, are currently achieving the expected standard in phonics compared with 2017.

The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in grammar, punctuation and spelling has been above the national average for the last two years. An increased proportion of pupils attained the higher standard in 2017. When

teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils, the accuracy of pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling improves in their written work. However, leaders have correctly identified that pupils do not always transfer these skills into every area of their writing. Therefore, pupils' use of accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling remains a priority on the school's improvement plan.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff place the highest priority on pupils' safety and welfare. All pupils who I spoke with said that they feel safe in school. Staff and parents who responded to their respective Ofsted surveys support this view. Pupils are sure that bullying rarely happens at school and, when it does, teachers are quick to resolve it. They know how to stay safe, including on roads and when using their bikes. Pupils benefit from the visits of staff from the National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children, who teach pupils how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They also enjoy learning about beach and water safety from the staff from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Pupils talk confidently about how to avoid the potential risks when they are online. They say that there is always someone at school they can trust if they have a problem.

Leaders carry out the necessary checks before an adult starts working or volunteering at the school. Staff are aware of their safeguarding duties. They receive training and frequent updates, including about radicalisation and extremism. Leaders ensure that pupils' safeguarding records are accurate, up to date and stored securely. They request external support for pupils when needed. School leaders and those responsible for governance take their safeguarding duties seriously. Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, including the school's safeguarding policy.

Inspection findings

- Children's skills and knowledge by the end of the early years have improved over time, although the proportion who attained a good level of development were still below the national average in 2017. Boys do not achieve as well as girls and disadvantaged children do not achieve as well as other children. Improved teaching is helping all groups of children currently in early years, including disadvantaged children and boys, to make better progress. Children are making particularly accelerated progress in reading and writing.
- The leader of the early years has accurately evaluated the quality of the provision and has clear plans for improvement. Leaders have made changes to the curriculum. They have incorporated topics that boys will find interesting, for example superheroes and dinosaurs.
- Relationships between adults and children in the early years provision are positive, which supports children in their learning and helps them to grow in confidence. Adults use skilled questioning to develop children's language and communication skills. For example, when children presented the teacher with 'food' baked in the mud kitchen, the teacher encouraged the children to describe how it looked and imagine how it might taste. However, adults do not always set

work that is sufficiently challenging to ensure that children make consistently good progress, particularly in the outdoor area.

- Leaders have identified that the proportion of pupils who attained expected and higher standards in reading was too low in 2017, particularly for pupils in Year 6. Leaders have introduced a range of new reading strategies to encourage more pupils to read, both at home and in school. For example, leaders have bought new reading resources for pupils to borrow from the library, 'reading eggs' can be taken home and 'legendary readers' are celebrated in assembly. As a result, an increased proportion of pupils are currently achieving the expected standard for reading. Improvements in pupils' reading are having a positive impact on their writing outcomes.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils in key stages 1 and 2 who attained at the expected standard in writing decreased compared to 2016. Very few pupils in key stages 1 or 2 attained the higher standard in writing in 2016 or 2017. Leaders have increased the focus on pupils' writing by ensuring that every pupil engages in a daily writing activity. Pupils' workbooks show that they make good progress in writing from their different starting points. An increased proportion of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are currently on track to meet the expected standard compared to 2017. However, despite the daily writing opportunities, pupils rarely write lengthy pieces in English or in other subjects. Comparatively few pupils have writing skills above those expected for their age.
- Leaders' interventions to improve attendance are having a positive impact. For example, the 'Race to 5' competition rewards the class achieving the best weekly attendance for five weeks. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school has significantly reduced this year to be close to the national average. Leaders recognise that sustaining these recent improvements, and ensuring that all pupils attend well, remains a priority for the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- adults consistently set challenging activities, particularly in the outdoor area, so that children in the early years make even better progress
- teachers provide pupils with more opportunities to become secure in their writing skills, including grammar, punctuation and spelling, by regularly completing extended writing activities in English and in other subjects
- staff continue to work closely with pupils and families in order to sustain recent improvements in attendance.

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

Yours sincerely

Rachel Tordoff
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the assistant principal, who is responsible for literacy. I held a meeting with the leader responsible for the early years. I also met with representatives of the academy trust, including the chief executive officer.

I visited five classes, jointly with you, to observe pupils' learning. I also visited the morning assembly. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school and during lessons. I spoke with a group of pupils in Years 5 and 6, as well as speaking with other pupils informally. I scrutinised a selection of pupils' workbooks with you and the assistant principal.

I met some parents informally at the beginning of the school day. I took into account the six responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the three free-text comments, and I reviewed a survey of parents carried out by school leaders. I also considered the six responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

I evaluated a range of information, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding, minutes of meetings of the trust and the academy advisory council, the school's use of pupil premium funding and information relating to pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour, as well as a selection of school policies.