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Mary Dolan  
Executive Headteacher  
Walsingham CE VA Primary School  
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Dear Miss Dolan

### **Short inspection of Walsingham CE VA Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 October 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 and the staff have worked very hard to maintain the strengths of the school that were identified at the last inspection. For example, you have continued to work with parents, carers and the local community to create a welcoming and happy environment. Parents say that the school is friendly and welcoming because everyone knows and cares for each other. Most of the 14 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were positive. For example, one parent said: 'This is a fantastic little school with a high level of personal, tailored education focused on the individual child's needs. My child is taught at a level and pace that works for him. Good communication with parents. Lots of varied activities for the children. Outdoor learning (gardening) is brilliant. My child now loves going to school.' Inspection evidence supports this view although, on some occasions, teachers do not have high enough expectations for what the most able pupils can achieve in their written work. In addition, pupils' handwriting and presentation are not following the school's policy and you recognise that this is an area to improve.

You and the deputy headteacher keep a close track of each pupil's progress from when they start at the school. You have strong systems in place to make sure that no pupil falls behind. Your published national test results vary over time because of the small number of pupils in each year group and the effect that one or two pupils can have on the school average. Therefore, it is not helpful to make comparisons

with national standards; however, your careful records and pupils' work in their books indicate the good progress all groups of pupils make over time. Consequently, you have addressed all the issues from the previous inspection. Your self-evaluation is accurate overall, but it does not give a sufficiently clear account of what you consider the strengths and areas for development of the school. Your school improvement plan has clear targets, but these are not the same targets you identify for improvement in the self-evaluation.

Pupils love their school. Pupils I spoke to said that they look forward to coming to school every day because all the adults are so kind and caring. One pupil said, 'It's great to be in this school because everybody talks to each other and are kind.' Pupils also love learning. Older pupils like the recently introduced 'critical learners' approach that you have developed with your staff. All of the six responses to the pupils' questionnaire were positive.

Governors effectively support school improvement. They have a strong knowledge of the strengths and development points of the school. The deputy headteacher makes sure they have a summary of pupil performance information two weeks before each governors' meeting. Governors send written questions about this information and the deputy headteacher replies in writing, all prior to the meeting. Governors say they find this approach helpful because they can then seek clarification or give further challenge at the meeting. Governors make regular visits to the school to check the accuracy of the information you and the deputy headteacher provide.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The effectiveness of your approach to safeguarding pupils was my first line of enquiry. You, the staff and governors have exceptionally strong systems in place for ensuring that pupils are safe. For example, you and the governors, supported by a range of appropriate advisers from the diocese and the local authority, managed the recent safeguarding incident highly effectively. You made sure parents were properly informed and that external support was made available to staff, pupils and parents.

You and the school's designated safeguarding lead keep very careful and thorough records of your support for the most vulnerable families. You work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe.

Pupils feel exceptionally safe at school. One pupil said: 'There is zero bullying at this school.' Pupils feel confident to talk to adults if they have any concerns and know that adults are always around to look after them.

### **Inspection findings**

- My second line of enquiry was about how you check that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress. The deputy headteacher is the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and rapidly

identifies any specific and additional needs pupils may have when they arrive at school. She works highly effectively with parents, external experts, teachers and support staff, ensuring that pupils get the most appropriate provision to meet their needs. Consequently, most pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good and sometimes exceptional progress from their starting points over time.

- My third line of enquiry focused on the progress children make through their Reception Year. Some children start Reception having attended early years provision, whereas others have not. The early years teacher and her assistant offer home visits for every child, and these help give a clear picture of each child's starting points. The teacher uses this information effectively to plan teaching and learning activities that ensure every child makes the best possible progress. For example, this year, every child is on track to achieve a good level of development.
- My fourth line of enquiry was about how you check the progress of all pupils, given the very small number of pupils in the school. Your highly robust and effective tracking system gives a clear picture of how well each pupil is getting on in reading, writing and mathematics. Your half-termly and formal pupil progress meetings take each child in turn and look at the progress they are making. If there are any concerns, these are rapidly addressed. Leaders talk informally with teachers and teaching assistants about individuals and groups of pupils on a weekly basis, making sure there are no immediate issues that must be addressed. Consequently, all pupils make good progress from their starting points, including those eligible for the pupil premium.
- My final line of enquiry questioned how the curriculum contributes to the progress pupils make. To evaluate this, I carried out a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work with you and the deputy headteacher, looking closely at their written work in English and other subjects from Reception to Year 6. The evidence confirmed that pupils have many opportunities to write at length in English and other subjects. This ensures that they learn how to write in different styles and for different purposes. For example, they are able to give clear explanations of what they have observed in science. However, two areas for improvement became apparent during our scrutiny. First, pupils and teachers are not consistently following the school's handwriting and presentation policy. For example, letters are not formed or joined sufficiently carefully. Second, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations for the quality and quantity of work that the most able pupils can produce in lessons.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- self-evaluation precisely identifies areas for improvement and these are carried through into the school improvement plan
- the school's handwriting and presentation policy is consistently implemented across the school
- teachers have sufficiently high expectations for the quality and quantity of

written work that the most able pupils produce in lessons.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I spoke with you, the deputy headteacher, the governors, a representative from the local authority, the designated safeguarding leads, the local authority designated safeguarding officer, the Diocese of Norwich safeguarding adviser, the staff, pupils and parents. We observed learning and teaching in all classes. I read with pupils in Reception, Year 5 and Year 6. I scrutinised a range of documents, including your self-evaluation and school improvement plan. I scrutinised pupils' writing in English and other subjects with you and the deputy headteacher. I scrutinised a range of safeguarding documentation and a sample of pupils' files. I scrutinised 14 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents, eight responses to the online staff questionnaire and six responses to the online pupil questionnaire.