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Dear Mrs Davey

Short inspection of Tattershall Primary School

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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Pupils continue to learn and achieve well. Your and other staff's commitment and passion are clear. The school provides rich educational experiences for pupils. Pupils I spoke with told me about the range of musical, sporting and other opportunities from which they benefit. I observed the 'daily mile', in which pupils, staff and parents walk or jog around the school site to promote healthy lifestyles. This generated a tremendously positive atmosphere and, as one pupil said, 'It gets us ready for learning.' Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the benefits of school trips, such as when they were learning about the Battle of Lincoln and the Magna Carta. Pupils also told me about an exciting STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) trip to the Engagement Centre at RAF Coningsby, where they met the Duke of Cambridge. The rich curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' love of learning and their personal development.

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve pupils' attendance. This priority has been achieved. You have emphasised clearly to parents and carers the importance of attendance. You monitor attendance closely and work with families of pupils who have persistent absence. As a result of your robust actions, the attendance of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, has been above the national average for the last two years.

Leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers check pupils' progress and understanding during lessons. Leaders and other staff

have a clear understanding of each pupil's learning and progress. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are often skilled in questioning pupils to check their understanding and develop their thinking. In the lessons we observed, however, we saw that sometimes teachers do not ensure that learning activities are as carefully matched to pupils' abilities as they could be. As a result, some pupils, particularly the most able, sometimes do not make the progress they should.

Leaders were also asked to strengthen pupils' skills in writing and mathematics. To support this, leaders were asked to develop the roles of subject leaders so they have a stronger impact on the quality of teaching across the school. As part of the development of leadership roles, you have introduced 'curriculum teams'. This innovative approach brings together leaders, other staff, pupils and governors to review standards. Subject leaders lead a range of actions to improve pupils' learning and have positive impact. However, while progress has been made, leaders have not ensured that the impacts of their actions are consistent.

A new 'mastery' approach to the teaching of mathematics has been introduced. Staff use visual imagery and apparatus well to help pupils understand the most important ideas in mathematics. Pupils' calculation skills are strong. However, they are less secure in their problem-solving and reasoning skills. In English, leaders have reviewed the school's approach to teaching phonics and introduced strategies to better support pupils' spelling skills, particularly in key stage 2. However, the often very strong content of pupils' writing is sometimes let down by inaccurate spelling, grammar and punctuation. Leaders have accurately identified these aspects as continuing priorities for improvement.

Your and the senior leaders' drive and enthusiasm have created a positive school culture shared by all, in which pupils are firmly at the centre of all that takes place. This is a school with an ethos of mutual respect. Relationships are strong. Pupils' behaviour is excellent at all times of the school day. Pupils are very proud of their new uniforms. You have built an effective team of teachers, many of whom were trained in the school, and who are rapidly developing their skills and expertise. All staff have worked hard to promote a positive learning culture. The large majority of parents and carers were emphatic in their praise for all aspects of the school. Pupils are polite, respectful, positive and confident.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a very strong culture of safeguarding. The governing body regularly checks that arrangements are secure. Staff receive regular training in child protection, including the government's 'Prevent' duty. The school's single central record of recruitment checks and recruitment processes is rigorous. School systems for recording concerns are also very thorough. Leaders take rapid action when they have concerns about pupils' welfare and well-being.

Pupils said that bullying is very rare. They are very confident that teachers will help them to sort out any problems they may have. Representing this ethos, one Year 6

pupil I spoke with said, 'When you're going through a tough time, school is always there if you need to talk.' Pupils spoke with confidence about how the school teaches them to keep themselves safe, for example, when online, and about road safety or 'stranger danger'. Pupils told me about the recent National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) assemblies, which also included workshops for parents. The very large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, or who spoke with me said that the school keeps their children safe.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed the key lines of enquiry I would investigate to test whether the school remains good. At the end of the last academic year, pupils' attainment and progress were often above those seen nationally in the early years and at the end of key stages 1 and 2. The proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above average for the last two years. Pupils' current work shows that the majority of pupils are making good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects.
- I looked at whether leaders' use of the pupil premium improves outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Current school information and work in pupils' books show that, overall, most of these pupils are making progress similar to that of other pupils. However, published and school information shows that too few disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, progress to achieve at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that disadvantaged pupils are supported well. The 'climb up club', for example, helps pupils who are falling behind to catch up. However, no review of the previous year's funding was published on the school's website or available during the inspection. The school's published pupil premium strategy is not sharply focused. Plans for improvement do not make clear enough the impact that leaders and governors wish to see, nor hold leaders to account to help to improve further the progress of this group of pupils.
- Our scrutiny of pupils' writing showed that pupils often complete work of a high standard and show perseverance in their work. In the early years and key stage 1, pupils confidently apply their phonics skills in their writing. Overall, pupils make good progress. However, we also identified that there are some inconsistencies. Sometimes, teachers are not rigorous enough in expecting pupils to use accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation in their writing. This sometimes reduces the quality of pupils' work. We also saw that, sometimes, the quality of pupils' writing is not as high in other subjects as it is in their English books.
- Pupils' work shows that pupils make good progress in mathematics, particularly in developing their understanding of calculation methods. The recently introduced 'mastery' approach to teaching mathematics is at an early stage of development. Sometimes, teachers do not match the level of challenge as accurately as they could to pupils' abilities. Sometimes, for example, pupils complete many examples of calculations at the same level of difficulty rather than moving on to

more challenging work. Teachers' promotion of pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills is inconsistent.

- I also explored with you and the deputy headteacher the progress of boys and girls. Published information showed that the attainment of boys was often well below that of girls at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2, particularly in reading and writing. Leaders and staff regularly review the attainment and progress of all pupils and intervene to help pupils who are falling behind. Pupils' work and school information about progress show that, overall across the school, boys' and girls' attainment and progress are broadly similar.
- Our observations of teaching and learning across the school showed that teachers are positive and enthusiastic and engage pupils' interest. They promote pupils' use of vocabulary well. Relationships are a strength. Teachers praise pupils, often referring to the school's values.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they more carefully target the use of the pupil premium to ensure that more disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, make accelerated progress
- all teachers further raise their expectations of pupils' use of accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling in their writing appropriate to pupils' abilities and in all subjects
- they further improve pupils' ability to problem solve and to explain clearly their reasoning in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

John Lawson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the deputy headteacher, four governors, including the chair of the governing body, and I spoke with parents at the beginning of the day. I met with pupils informally during the school day and had a formal meeting with a group of pupils. Together, you and I observed teaching and learning in five lessons. During these visits, I looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils to evaluate the quality of their learning. I also examined with you and the deputy headteacher pupils' work in a sample of their books.

During the inspection, I scrutinised a variety of documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' attainment and progress, staff performance and the school's self-evaluation document and its plans for improvement. I assessed the impact on standards of leaders' actions taken since the last inspection, as well as additional lines of enquiry. I looked at the range and quality of information provided on the school's website. I considered the 61 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire and the five parental comments made through the Ofsted free-text service. I also considered the nine responses to the staff questionnaire.