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Mrs Susan Rayner
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Rayner

Short inspection of The Old Leake Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 11 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 January 2013.

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 your staff are a committed and passionate team who are determined to provide the best education possible for the pupils at Old Leake Primary and Nursery School. You know your pupils well and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. You have accurately identified the school's priorities for improvement and used this knowledge effectively to further improve the school's provision. Staff provide a vibrant place to learn where pupils are well cared for.

The positive and caring school ethos is evident. The colourful displays of pupils' work and achievements can be seen across the school and in classrooms. Teachers ask pupils to celebrate their strengths and talents. For example, pupils in key stage 1 were asked to explore 'I am super at...' and recognise their individual talents. Teachers show warmth and acknowledge when pupils are kind and considerate.

Pupils are respectful to each other and to all adults in the school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is firmly embedded in the school. During school assemblies, the local vicar discusses the importance of belonging, the local community and friendship. Pupils are able to share confidently their views about the importance of belonging to groups and clubs.

Staff provide tailored provision effectively to meet pupils' learning and welfare needs. Teachers want the best for every pupil and use their skills effectively to provide interesting learning opportunities and appropriate support.

Parents who spoke to me said that they are happy with the school and the information that they receive to keep them informed about their children's progress.

Adults in the early years provide learning activities that enable children to explore the world around them. Children can readily access activities and quickly develop their ideas, with the help from adults. In the Nursery, children developed an activity from building a series of ramps for toy vehicles into an imaginative river scene with numerous bridges. The adult expertly facilitated the children's learning and promptly provided further resources so that children could fully develop their idea. The children were absorbed in their learning throughout the activity.

Since the last inspection you have effectively dealt with the areas for improvement. Through a range of training and coaching opportunities, you have improved the quality of teachers' questioning skills. During our tour of the school, we noted teachers and teaching assistants using a broad range of questions to deepen and check pupils' understanding.

You have worked alongside middle leaders to develop their leadership and management skills effectively. Working with middle leaders, you have developed a team who can effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Middle leaders use pupils' assessment information well to plan and prioritise actions. They provide appropriate training and give regular helpful feedback to staff. They are keen to share their expertise and further develop the teaching team.

You and the mathematics leader recognise that there is further work to be done to ensure that the new mathematics curriculum is taught well throughout the school and that pupils have plenty of opportunities to use their problem-solving and reasoning skills. You are keen that a greater proportion of pupils achieve the higher standard in mathematics. You and the mathematics leader keep a close eye on the effectiveness of teaching. Where necessary, you introduce changes that help ensure all pupils are learning successfully.

You recognise that the school has been below the national average for the past two years in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test at the end of key stage 2. Pupils' scores in the spelling test have not been high enough. In response, you and the English leader have revised how spelling is taught. Spelling skills are now taught consistently across all classes. You recognise that further work needs to be done to ensure that teachers check that pupils use grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately in their writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have created a positive culture of safeguarding. You ensure that staff and governors receive regular training and updates. The governing body has a dedicated governor for safeguarding who checks the single central register. Together, you and the pupil premium leader, also a designated leader for safeguarding, provide bespoke support to pupils and their families. You are proactive and tenacious in your approach.

Together, you use every opportunity to provide appropriate support for vulnerable pupils. You monitor pupils closely and ensure that concerns about pupils' welfare are referred promptly to the appropriate agencies. You have commissioned the services of a trained counsellor to support the specific emotional needs of pupils. You keep well-organised records and ensure that you follow up any actions taken. You are responsive to the changing needs of the local community and seek ways of providing appropriate support.

Pupils who spoke to me explained in detail how they learn to keep safe, particularly online. They also shared how they support, with help from adults, their friends on the playground during breaktimes.

Inspection findings

- During our tour of the school, we saw many examples where pupils were able to practise their early reading skills. In 2017, there was a dip in the proportion of pupils who passed the phonic screening check. The additional learning groups you have created this year are making sure that pupils who struggle with phonics get the right help quickly. Teaching assistants work well alongside class teachers to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support.
- Teachers provide exciting and stimulating lessons where pupils are expected to participate fully in their learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 enjoyed the challenges of multiplying decimals. Pupils supported each other well when the class teacher set a challenging question to check on their learning. They were able to explain their reasoning well when asked to justify their answer. However, opportunities for problem-solving and reasoning are not provided consistently across all year groups. As a result, too few pupils reach the higher standard in mathematics at the end of key stage 2.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test was below the national average in 2016 and 2017. You have already put in place additional spelling activities and you are monitoring these carefully. You acknowledge that there needs to be greater consistency of teachers providing opportunities for pupils to effectively use and apply their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills.
- Pupils in Year 1 have a smooth transition from the early years. The class teacher provides a range of interesting activities to reinforce pupils' mathematical understanding. For example, pupils were focused on their activity of reading number labels, counting the appropriate number of beads and then carefully placing them on to sticks. Pupils were able to count the beads successfully and say how many more they needed to make numbers to 20.
- Pupils' workbooks show that they have a rich curriculum that enables them to think deeply and enquire. For example, Year 6 topic books showed how pupils were asked to consider the changing number of evacuees during the Second World War. They used this information to plot a graph and explain what it told them.

- Pupils' behaviour and conduct is good. You carefully track pupils' behaviour well, keeping detailed records of incidents and actions taken. Pupils enjoy the rewards that they receive and understand the importance of trying their best at school. They know clearly how to keep themselves safe online and how to manage online bullying should it arise.
- Pupils are given opportunities to learn about British values and how these link to their daily lives. One pupil told me that, 'Tolerance is important. It is about being patient with others and accepting differences.' They value the work of the elected school council and they understand how their right to vote in school council elections is a form of democracy. The school council is appreciative that the headteacher has acted upon their request for more outdoor play equipment.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide consistent opportunities for pupils to use and apply their grammar, punctuation and spelling in their writing activities so that a greater proportion of pupils achieve the expected standard at the end of key stage 2
- teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills so that a greater proportion of pupils achieve greater depth 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

Emma Nuttall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders and a governor. I spoke with parents before school and with a group of pupils about their school experience. Jointly with you, I visited a range of classes and we sampled pupils' books. In addition, I checked the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the school's record of recruitment checks on staff. I evaluated the school's documentation about pupils' achievement, behaviour records, planning for improvement and attendance. I took account of the 44 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 24 responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text service. There were 13 responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff. There were no pupil responses for me to consider.