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Mrs Catherine Stratton
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Stratton

Short inspection of Saxilby Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 December 2017, 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since arriving at the school three years ago, you have worked hard to ensure that the school improves. You recognised that some aspects of the school's provision had previously not been good enough and you quickly put in place plans for the school's development. This has led to significant improvement. You have ensured that staff feel they are challenged and supported. They want to do their best and recognise the positive changes that have taken place. You have identified areas where you felt that teaching was not effective enough. Actions that you and other senior leaders have taken mean the quality of learning across the school is now consistent across the different classes. You have created a culture where staff are increasingly confident about their work. A parent summed up the views of many others I spoke with, or who completed the Parent View survey, by saying, 'We feel that the school has hugely improved over the last couple of years and is still on the up.'

You work effectively with the governing body, whose members are experienced and supportive. The chair has successfully developed the governors' skills by ensuring that governors receive regular training. Governors know the school well and are increasingly confident about holding leaders to account. The work of the governing body is organised well so that each member knows their responsibilities. The governing body checks that additional funding is spent effectively and the school

meets its statutory obligations.

The school provides pupils with a very strong ethos where they feel happy and secure. Parents appreciate the atmosphere of the school. You have ensured that the school's values are clear and understood by all staff and pupils. The school's approach is centred on the idea that 'Saxilby School LEARNS together'. Each letter of the 'LEARNS' word is used to represent a key aspect of the school's aims and characteristics. This approach has resulted in a strong and positive culture where pupils feel that staff are supportive and relationships are positive. Behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around the school. This helps the pupils to learn. The pupils I spoke to were overwhelmingly happy with the school. In a few cases, they had moved to the school from elsewhere and commented on the friendliness of teachers, as well as how they felt safe and confident. One said the school is 'brilliant and amazing'. This view was typical of the comments made by pupils and was confirmed by those who completed a survey for this inspection.

Children make a good start in Reception. They settle quickly into the routines of the day and work well with each other. They are happy to take turns, take risks and explore the good range of resources within the provision. They are making a good start in developing their skills in phonics and the understanding of numbers. The proportion who achieved a good level of development by the end of Reception in 2017 was above average. You have improved the teaching of phonics across the school. This is now a strong feature of teaching, with a good level of consistency across year groups. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has improved and is now above average. The proportion was, however, slightly lower in 2017 because of the characteristics of this cohort of pupils. Pupils achieve above average outcomes at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress in national tests at the end of key stage 2 shows a strong improvement, especially in reading and mathematics.

You have worked hard to ensure that good teaching is the highest priority for staff. They have benefited from working with other schools as well as receiving additional support and training. This has led to a good level of consistency in planning, strong subject knowledge and skills. Staff work well together to share ideas and discuss how they can improve further. You have challenged any underperformance of staff, where required. Staffing is consistent and stable following a period where some classes had changes in teachers, sometimes during the course of a year.

During the inspection, we agreed areas where further improvement is a priority. Although pupils made average progress at the end of key stage 2 in 2017, not enough made above average progress. We discussed the actions that you are taking to improve this area and the need to ensure that staff use questioning and feedback effectively in order to identify gaps in learning. The resources and provision for teaching computing require further development. The schools' arrangements to assess progress in foundation subjects such as history, geography, French, art and design need to be reviewed and developed further. In our discussions about these areas you were able to show how school leaders have already started to take actions that will lead to improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

You regard pupils' safety and well-being as a high priority. You take appropriate and timely actions to ensure that any concerns about a pupil are checked rigorously. You are tenacious and resilient, giving good examples of how you have followed up particular concerns. The school works well with external agencies to protect and support pupils. Staff receive regular training and are confident about how to spot concerns and report them. You ensure that safeguarding arrangements, including mandatory training and pre-employment checks, are fit for purpose.

Pupils say they feel safe at school. They have confidence in the school's staff and feel that they would have no concern about reporting bullying or any other concerns they might have. Pupils learn how to stay safe when using computers and receive guidance about the importance of road safety. Pupils appreciate the support and encouragement they are given about how to look after each other and many make a positive contribution to the life of the school.

Inspection findings

- I looked at the teaching of writing and whether pupils are making enough progress in this aspect of their learning. This is because pupils made less progress in writing in the 2017 key stage 2 tests than they did in reading and mathematics. I looked at pupils' writing across a range of subjects, especially in key stage 2 classes. The school has identified writing as a priority area for improvement. As a result, pupils are now making improved progress in this aspect of their work. This is especially the case in Year 6. Across other classes, teachers are working hard to ensure a good level of consistency and this is helping pupils to develop their handwriting skills, punctuation and use of grammar. They are able to write confidently in a range of styles and contexts, adjusting their writing style accordingly.
- I investigated whether or not the overall progress made by pupils in key stage 2 was good. In the 2017 key stage 2 tests, progress in reading and mathematics was average. This was because the proportion who achieved the higher levels or who made rapid progress from their starting points was not consistent. The school has already identified this as a priority for further development. Current actions are rightly focused on deepening pupils' application of mathematical skills, ability to infer meaning from texts and develop higher-level skills in their understanding. In order to improve this aspect of learning further, a key focus has been improving the use of questioning, feedback and assessment in order to identify gaps in knowledge or skills. School leaders are aware that although this area of learning is improving, more work is still needed to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress across key stage 2 classes.
- I investigated the breadth and range of the curriculum subjects provided by the school, along with the arrangements for accurate assessment in foundation subjects. The school provides a very good range of learning opportunities across a wide range of subjects. Pupils have the opportunity to study science, languages, art, music and also to participate in a good range of extra-curricular activities and trips. The provision for computing is, however, currently being

developed further. The assessment arrangements for foundation subjects are in place but are also still under development. These areas therefore remain as priorities already identified by school leaders.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- learning continues to improve and a higher proportion of pupils make strong progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics
- the improvements already made to teaching are now consolidated and improved further, enabling staff to check learning through effective questioning and use this information to ensure that gaps in learning, or skills, are a priority
- the development of the curriculum provision for computing continues and systems for checking progress in foundation subjects are refined.

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

David Bray
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We agreed the focus and activities I would carry out at the start of the inspection. I checked safeguarding records, training for staff in safeguarding and a few specific examples that showed how you approached any concerns you might have. I also checked arrangements for ensuring that adults working at or visiting the school are suitably qualified and experienced. I visited lessons across the school and attended part of the Christmas production presented by children in the Reception. We checked a sample of pupils' work and discussed information about the pupils' progress. I spoke with a group of pupils. I met with four representatives of the governing body and reviewed school documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary and school development plan. I took account of the 74 responses to Parent View as well as 24 responses to a staff survey and 50 survey responses completed by pupils.