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Mr R Thrower  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Thrower

### **Short inspection of Wittering Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 February 2016, 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 2011.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are determined to fulfil your aim of providing an 'inclusive, secure and caring environment where the children can feel safe, well cared for and happy while they learn and grow'. In this you have been successful. As a result, pupils, many of whom join the school midway through the year, have the confidence to succeed.

Leaders, including governors, ensure that Wittering Primary School plays a significant role in the local community. You are rightly proud of the distinctive family centre, which offers appropriate activities such as first aid courses, art sessions and 'making the most out of family life' sessions for parents and their children. One parent commented that leaders are 'extremely understanding and accommodating' of the individual circumstances of children and their families. This is a view supported by many other parents.

This is a happy school. Pupils show respect for one another and behave very well. The classrooms, play and lunch areas are buzzing with friendly discussions and activities. Pupils' personal development and welfare are provided for exceptionally well. Pupils value the extensive support that they receive from the day that they join the school. New arrivals receive a 'settling in' pack, which helps them to quickly become established in the Wittering Primary School community.

Pupils are keen to explain how much they enjoy attending school. They are cheerful, inquisitive and supportive of each other in lessons. One pupil explained that, 'teachers make learning fun' and her peers agreed. The quality of teaching is continuing to improve and teachers plan a wide range of learning activities. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic in their learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 energetically worked together to create a storyboard based upon a Russian myth, which demonstrated their understanding about the traditions of different countries.

Pupils are proud to accept the leadership opportunities provided for them. Older pupils read to younger pupils and maturely explain how this is helping to develop their own learning skills. The school council plays an important role in helping to improve your school. It successfully worked with you to introduce 'golden time', a rewards system that is valued by pupils in the school.

You have ensured that children get off to a flying start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children enjoy learning and continue to progress well as a result of well-planned and imaginative activities. They work together very well. For example, a small group of children were very proud to explain how they were using different materials to build 'a house to live in', in the outside learning area.

Standards at Key Stage 1 remain significantly above the national average. Pupils achieve very well in phonics (letters and the sounds they make), due to the strong teaching practice and subject knowledge of their teachers. Teachers plan learning that interests pupils and helps them to make rapid progress. For example, pupils in a Year 1 class were able to provide mature views on the techniques used by an artist to demonstrate characters in *Little Red Riding Hood*.

Since the last inspection, standards have remained high by the end of Key Stage 2. The last inspection report asked that you improve attainment in writing. You were successful in doing so. Despite the large proportion of pupils that move in and out of the school during each school year, you have taken swift action to address the fall in outcomes in 2015 and are making sure that achievement is good for pupils currently in the school.

At the last inspection, inspectors also asked that you provide consistent challenge to most-able pupils. You and your leaders continue to take robust action to do this by carefully monitoring these pupils' progress and providing a wider range of learning opportunities, so that they are effectively challenged. For example, most-able pupils in a Year 5 lesson enjoyed the challenge of working with a teaching assistant on harder mathematical equations.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Governors and school leaders are vigilant in making sure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The single central record is carefully maintained. Adults are well trained in relevant aspects of child protection. They are aware of how to identify issues and know the procedures for reporting any concerns that they may have. Pupils explained that the secure school site is something that makes

them feel safe when at school. Pupils are able to outline the strategies they use to stay safe when using the internet. The overwhelming majority of parents agree that their children are safe at Wittering Primary School.

## **Inspection findings**

- You, your governors and staff are acutely aware of the needs of pupils, many of whom arrive midway through a key stage or school year. You have been very successful in making sure that their personal development and welfare are well catered for. This is a strength of the school. An example of this is the 'Out of Area' club, in which skilled and sensitive support is on hand for pupils who may need it. This successfully adds to pupils' sense of security and confidence in their learning and social development. However, you acknowledge that you need to establish each new pupil's academic starting point even more quickly than is currently the case.
- Your inspirational leadership has established successfully an ethos which staff share and support. Staff morale is high. They are aware of the high expectations that you have of them and work hard to meet them. As a consequence, the school has continued to improve since the last inspection. The overwhelming majority of parents appreciate the work that is being done, with many commenting on how they find you and your staff to be approachable and caring.
- Governance is a strength of the school. Governors work with you to provide a clear strategic direction, which has the pupils' well-being and achievement at its core. Governors are robust in their support of you and your staff. Similarly, they will challenge you when they think that things need to improve. Governors ensure that you manage staff performance with rigour and in line with the school's agreed policies.
- Outcomes for pupils at the school have remained strong since the last inspection. This is especially true in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Year 1 phonics and at Key Stage 1, where standards are significantly higher than the national average. This is due to the effective teaching that pupils receive.
- Standards at Key Stage 2 have been high since the last inspection. However, pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2 fell in 2015. You have carefully analysed the reasons and taken swift action to prevent this from happening again. Evidence seen in pupils' work indicates that they are using these writing skills very effectively across a range of subjects. For example, in science, pupils are able to analyse fluently the findings of their experiments, showing the same strengths in their writing as seen in their work in English.
- You and your leadership team have made effective use of the funding to support disadvantaged pupils, many of whom arrive midway through a key stage. Great care is taken to ensure that these pupils are able to settle into school quickly. The available evidence shows that they are making progress that is at least in line with, or even better than, their peers nationally.

- Similarly, you have taken additional steps to establish the specific requirements of pupils with special educational needs or disability. You put in place appropriate interventions and carefully track their impact. As a result, these pupils are making strong progress from their individual starting points.
- Leaders share the commitment to prepare each child for life in modern Britain through activities that are woven into the curriculum and the broader life of the school. For example, pupils elect school council members, are able to visit different places of worship and hear from members of the Wittering community about their role in British society. As a result, pupils are developing a deeper knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live.
- You are aware that there remains some inconsistency in the quality of teaching. For example, some pupils have more opportunities than others to apply the skills that they are developing in mathematics to achieve mastery. Similarly, not all teachers follow the school's policy of providing positive support for pupils through comments on their work; on occasion their comments are terse or too vague to be helpful.
- Middle leaders have played an important part in the school's development. For example, they have been effective in improving the teaching of writing across the school. However, their evaluations of the effectiveness of their work need to be consistent in focusing primarily on the impact of actions on pupils' achievement.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders accelerate the work underway to establish more quickly the starting points of pupils who arrive at the school midway through the school year
- all middle leaders are robust in their evaluation of the impact of their work on pupils' achievement
- all teachers plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply the skills that they are learning, in particular 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 Peterborough City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Lucas  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met with you, your senior leaders, three middle leaders, 14 governors and a group of 13 pupils. Together with you, I observed pupils at work in a range of lessons. I also spent time speaking informally with pupils at break and lunchtime. I carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work in their books and learning journals. I reviewed a range of documents, including those relating to governance, safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, and school self-evaluation and planning. I considered 63 responses from parents on Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents) and 40 responses to the staff survey. I also spoke with 11 parents and carers.