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1 March 2017

Mrs Dawne Hunt  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Hunt

### **Short inspection of Holton Le Clay Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 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 May 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is characterised by busy, inquisitive pupils, who are keen to share their work with staff and visitors. A Year 2 pupil could not wait to show me his work on mnemonics, using very well-developed phonic skills to illustrate his method of remembering the spelling of words, such as 'sugar'.

The pupils' positive attitudes to learning are evident in every class and reflect the very good role models provided by members of staff. The school's culture of hard work and care is clear from the moment one enters the building. Parents' comments and opinions are valued and acted on, while displays support potential and new parents in preparing their children for school. Pupils' work and achievements are celebrated throughout the school and during the weekly celebration assemblies. The school's work to prepare Year 2 pupils for their successful transition to the local junior school is supported by visits and links to improve pupils' reading. The parents I spoke with during the inspection were particularly complementary about the school's actions in making this transition as smooth as possible for pupils.

You and the school's leadership team have harnessed the strengths identified at the time of the last inspection. This has included using the federation with the junior school to promote teachers' understanding of pupils' development and learning over the primary years. This has supported teachers in improving their classroom practice.

Nevertheless, teachers' ongoing assessment of what pupils have learned, and the next steps in their learning, are not as well developed as they could be. Consequently, the progress that pupils already make could be improved further.

Governors and leaders have well-established practices for monitoring the school's performance. Governors visit the school and invite subject leaders to attend governing body meetings so that they can check that the information you provide is accurate. This has helped to ensure that any pupil underperformance is addressed and does not recur the following year. However, not all aspects of the school's performance are recorded in a systematic and organised manner. As a result, leaders are not able to analyse, identify and address developing issues as early as they might. This is also inhibiting leaders' ability to show the attention to detail necessary to plan and assess the impact of their actions for school improvement as well as they could.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Physical safety measures combine with a tangible culture of care towards pupils and their families that is evident throughout the school. Regular training on issues such as extremism and domestic violence ensures that staff and governors are clear about their safeguarding responsibilities. Governors value their links with specific cohorts of pupils and believe that this contributes to keeping pupils safe, as the bonds of trust between adults and pupils build over time. Leaders and governors understand the importance of good communication with parents, using questionnaires, formal consultations and informal conversations to cultivate positive links. The vast majority of parents value the good lines of communication with the school's staff and believe that this adds to their children's safety.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders use published information on pupils' attainment to plan school improvement actions that will eradicate underachievement. Teachers follow leaders' instructions and directives closely and this ensures that there is a high level of consistency in classroom practice. As a result, the school's leaders are very effective at addressing any dips in the performance of individuals or groups of pupils. For example, a drop in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics screening check in 2015 was successfully reversed in 2016.
- Leaders' modifications to the school's curriculum are inspiring pupils to become more willing writers. Work in pupils' books shows that boys, in particular, are benefiting from regular opportunities to write extended pieces and this is helping to build their resilience as writers. Improvements in the grammar and content of pupils' writing show that the majority are making particularly good progress in their writing this year.
- Leaders' half-termly meetings with teachers are being increasingly well used to check on pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the year. Leaders track the progress of pupils of different abilities carefully to ensure

that their progress is no less strong than that of any other pupils. Current assessment information shows that the majority of pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Leaders deploy additional support quickly and to good effect where progress appears to slow.

- The small numbers of disadvantaged pupils usually make good progress from their starting points. Leaders review the impact of the additional funds from the pupil premium to ensure that any differences in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils are minimised. Leaders understand the importance of using the pupil premium to the full each year, acknowledging that their current accounting practices may suggest that large sums go unused, although this is not the case.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders' analysis of management information is more effective in securing school improvement at an earlier stage by:
  - improving the quality and organisation of record-keeping
  - being more precise in their plans for school improvement so that key next steps are identified, with clear milestones for success, and through which leaders and teachers can be held fully accountable for the impact of their actions
- teachers match work to pupils' abilities more accurately to embed and deepen pupils' learning and ensure that rates of progress and attainment are maximised.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen McMullan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and shared my key lines of enquiry. I also met with the school's deputy headteacher, seven governors and parents at the start of the school day. I considered the responses of parents from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. We visited all classes in the school, spending a short time in each, and looked at a sample of pupils' work together. I viewed a range of documents including an evaluation of the school's performance and plans for further improvement, information on how the pupil premium is spent and a number of policy documents, including those for child protection and special educational needs.