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Mrs Gill Williams
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Williams

Short inspection of Dringhouses Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 May 2019, 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 June 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Your high aspirations and inspirational leadership lead to pupils receiving an exceptionally high standard of education. You, and your new leadership team, have created a culture of high expectations that has led to exemplary teaching and excellent standards of work produced by pupils. Your passion for all pupils to do well is shared by all staff and morale is exceptionally high. Parents and carers are exceptionally confident that their children are benefiting very well from your work and the work of your staff.

You have developed an extremely effective leadership team and very skilled subject leaders who have great expertise. Your astute use of professional development for teachers, and their assistants, has had a very positive effect on the quality of teaching. Leaders at all levels check the quality of teaching accurately and regularly, making sure that the very best practice is shared among the whole staff to secure highly effective teaching across the school. You have successfully tackled a key point made at the previous inspection of the school when you were asked to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better.

The quality of pupils' writing is exceptionally high. Your teachers are very skilled in developing pupils' writing and provide many excellent opportunities for them to write at length, not only in English lessons but across a wide range of subjects. When checking pupils' work with your subject leaders I saw high-quality writing in science, geography and history. Pupils' work was beautifully presented and showed a deep understanding of the subjects and topics they were studying.

You noticed that progress in reading slipped across key stage 2 in 2018, particularly for middle-ability pupils. Your literacy leaders were quick to introduce a refined approach to the teaching of reading across the school and teachers have adapted quickly to the new system. Teachers are using very high-quality reading resources skilfully to develop comprehension and pupils' vocabulary exceptionally well. I saw many examples of sophisticated vocabulary being used by pupils and high-level comprehension skills. It was very clear to me that your new approach to the teaching of reading is having a marked impact on pupils' progress, especially the progress of middle-ability pupils, and is leading to very high standards of attainment across all years.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have made sure that pupils are well cared for. You swiftly provide early help should there be any concerns about pupils' welfare. The school works closely and very effectively with parents and external agencies in the local authority. This helps to make sure children's needs are met. Safeguarding records are of high quality and clearly indicate the school's commitment to keep all pupils safe.

Child protection training for staff means they are knowledgeable and up to date in terms of the most recent guidance and legislation. Staff are vigilant and know what to do should they have any concerns about children's welfare. Governors make sure that all adults on the school site are checked to confirm they are fit to work with children. The school's central register is well kept. Governors receive regular reports about safeguarding and commission an annual review of the school's procedures to make sure they are of a very high standard.

In school, pupils behave exceptionally well and are very pleasant and polite. All the pupils I spoke with told me they felt safe in school and that bullying is exceptionally rare. They said that, should they have any worries or concerns, staff respond quickly to sort matters out for them. Pupils have a detailed knowledge of how to stay safe, including using the internet safely. Parents are unanimous in saying that their children are well cared for and safe at school.

Inspection findings

- Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils. They question pupils very skilfully, as do teaching assistants, to make them think deeply about their

learning. I saw teachers swiftly assessing pupils' learning and providing excellent advice to overcome misconceptions and misunderstandings.

- Teachers' planning of the curriculum ensures that pupils build on prior learning to develop very secure understanding. For example, in mathematics, systematic planning develops pupils' skills using practical applications and problem-solving that are extremely well structured. As a result, pupils enjoy mathematics and are very skilled. Occasionally, some pupils are not given sufficient time to complete challenging tasks and deepen their understanding in mathematics.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are impressive. They enjoy sharing ideas with each other and act quickly on the advice given to them by their teachers. Consequently, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make impressive progress in their subjects.
- I was interested in finding out if spelling is improving, as it was broadly average at the end of key stage 2 in 2018. I found your staff to be very consistent in developing pupils' spelling skills in English lessons and across a wide range of other subjects. I saw pupils using spelling cards, phonics techniques and dictionaries to spell correctly. Pupils are keen to please their teachers and improve their work. For example, I saw pupils in Year 2 correcting misspelled words independently and writing out corrections. Overall, the quality of spelling is improving, although there are times when pupils are not given enough time to correct work and some errors continue to occur.
- Pupils have a real thirst for learning and are especially proud of their work and read widely both at home and in school. When speaking to pupils they told me about the school's values and the half-termly focus you have on each value. They said the focus for this half-term is inclusion, and for the last half-term it was tolerance and respect. Pupils told me, 'Everyone has rights and religious beliefs that we respect.' Their knowledge of British values is well embedded in their actions. I noticed pupils listening well to each other in class, supporting each other with their learning and playing exceptionally well together at breaktime.
- In a brief visit to early years, I saw children cooperating particularly well together, making excellent use of the high-quality facilities both indoors and outdoors. Over time, the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development has been well above average. I listened to some children reading and they read fluently, with enjoyment, and persisted when trying to work out unfamiliar words. Other children were writing about trains and told me about their visit to the National Railway Museum the previous day. They enjoy school, and visits contribute well to children's learning.
- Your plans for improvement focus well on the key actions to strengthen teaching and further improve outcomes for pupils. However, you are not always clear about how much you want pupils to progress and how well teaching is expected to improve because of the actions being taken. This limits precise analysis by you and your governors of how effective these actions are.
- Governors are astute and highly aspirational for the pupils. They visit the school regularly and are well informed by leaders. However, they take nothing for granted and commission external reviews of the school to check out the views of

leaders. Governors seek the views of parents and use this as a measure of the school's success. They are holding leaders to account and challenging them to continuously improve the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans for improvement identify the progress you expect pupils to make and the expected developments in the quality of teaching because of the actions being taken
- pupils are given sufficient time to engage with challenging tasks in mathematics
- pupils are given sufficient time to correct their spelling so that more reach the very highest standard.

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

Yours sincerely

James McGrath
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met regularly with you as part of a professional dialogue throughout the day. I also met with three members of the governing body, and held a meeting with a representative of the local authority. I conducted an analysis of pupils' work with subject leaders and senior leaders. I observed a range of teaching and listened to pupils reading in each class, including children in the early years. I spoke to pupils throughout the day about their safety and learning in school and met with a small group of pupils to discuss their views about the school. I analysed 28 staff questionnaires, 56 responses to Ofsted's pupils' questionnaire and 155 parents' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. I considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.