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Mrs Sharon Nour
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Sharon Nour

Short inspection of Great Dunham Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 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 July 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Following the previous inspection, leaders were asked to raise pupils' achievement by improving assessment arrangements and the quality of presentation in their work. Leaders were also asked to improve pupils' writing skills by providing them with opportunities to practice them across different subjects and to develop their vocabulary. Subsequently, pupils' achievement in handwriting, punctuation, grammar and spelling has risen in all year groups, with younger pupils' writing skills improving quickly. However, leaders' actions to accelerate pupils' progress in writing have not been as effective for older pupils. Equally, while actions to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics have been successful for younger pupils, the assessment information you shared with me, and your accurate self-evaluation, demonstrate that progress in mathematics continues to be variable across older year groups.

Since your appointment in September 2014, you have worked to bring about improvements both to the quality of teaching and to pupils' achievement. Your evaluation of teaching is accurate and you have not avoided tough conversations in order to challenge any instances of weak performance and establish high expectations. Most current teachers have been appointed since the previous inspection and you have also appointed subject leaders for all areas of the

curriculum. Leaders have introduced new approaches to teaching mathematics and writing which have raised the achievement of younger pupils. However, while leaders' priorities for improvement are accurate, you agree that the teaching of writing and mathematics still needs to offer greater challenge across older year groups and that leaders should bring this about quickly. You also agree that some teachers need to make better use of assessment information to plan activities for pupils of different abilities.

All current staff and governors are supportive of the direction in which you are taking the school. The school's strong values of 'inspired to learn, motivated to achieve' and 'memorable moments' are clearly evident in classroom relationships between teachers and pupils and in the interesting activities and resources with which pupils are provided. As a result, pupils across the year groups are confident about their learning and appreciate the work of their teachers to help them.

Parents and carers are very supportive of the work of the school. They appreciate leaders' actions to keep their children safe, to help them enjoy learning and their quick response to any concerns. They praise leaders for the promotion of good behaviour and relationships between pupils. The parents of those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, or who join the school at times other than the start of the school year, speak positively about how you care for their children, help them settle in quickly and remove barriers to their learning. However, some parents also believe the work set for their children should be more challenging.

Your large governing body demonstrates the strong local support you have secured for the work of the school. Governors are committed to their roles and offer an accurate view about the school's performance and those areas which must be improved. The questions they ask and their regular visits demonstrate the careful balance of support and challenge they present. They have, in the past, questioned the range of improvement work adopted by leaders. Consequently, current strategic plans are focused more sharply on the most important priorities.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors undertake their statutory duties with great care. They ensure that staff are suitably trained. Leaders use the latest government guidance to help every adult appreciate potential risks to pupils and understand how to respond. As a result, there is a vigilant safeguarding culture and staff act quickly to report concerns. Leaders record information efficiently and ensure that vulnerable pupils are supported. They communicate any concerns to appropriate agencies and the checks they make in school keep them fully aware of pupils' experiences. As a result, leaders respond effectively to changing circumstances and continue to support pupils well.

Pupils feel safe and are very confident about reducing risk when enjoying the internet facilities, online games and communication technology. All checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children are undertaken diligently and

they are effective. Leaders and governors ensure that access to the school site is secure and safe.

Inspection findings

- To ascertain whether the school remains good, two of my lines of enquiry focused on pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics, and the quality of teaching in both subjects. This included how well teachers use their knowledge of what pupils are able to do to inform their planning. Test results in both 2016 and 2017 suggested that some pupils had not reached the higher standards they were capable of by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, particularly boys. Your accurate evaluation had also identified this.
- Leaders' assessment records show that pupils currently in the early years, key stage 1 and Year 3 make secure progress in writing and mathematics. However, information about Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 shows that, although most pupils make expected progress in both subjects, few reach higher standards, including the most able pupils.
- Visits to lessons across Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 demonstrate that teaching helps more pupils to reach expected standards. However, teachers do not provide the challenging work which helps pupils to thoroughly develop their mathematical and writing skills. Activities are similar for pupils of different abilities and there are fewer opportunities to work at depth in these subjects. In mathematics, teaching is often focused on easier arithmetic and number skills, with less attention paid to more taxing calculations, reasoning or problem-solving. In writing, there is less opportunity for pupils to develop extended pieces in different subjects other than English. Detailed scrutiny of pupils' mathematics and writing work shows recent improvements but it is too soon to be confident of their impact.
- Visits to lessons across the early years, key stage 1 and Year 3 show that a wide range of good teaching is supporting pupils to make good progress, including boys. Scrutiny of mathematics work shows that teaching is challenging pupils of different abilities to make use of their knowledge, and activities require them to tackle difficult problems, often with the use of mathematical equipment. They do so confidently and with success. Writing books show that pupils are being taught to extend their thinking and create imaginative stories with an effective structure.
- Teaching in all year groups supports effective spoken literacy, a powerful vocabulary and successful sentence writing. Pupils also spell with greater accuracy. All teachers follow the school's handwriting scheme consistently and pupils have made rapid improvements in the quality of their work, including those whose attainment had been lower in the past and who needed to catch up. This group includes pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- My final line of enquiry was concerned with the quality of leaders' work when evaluating teaching and how they use the findings of their monitoring to bring about further improvement, especially in writing and mathematics. Most subject leaders are new to their roles. Evidence from the inspection indicates that their views about the strengths of teaching are accurate but that the recent actions

they have taken to secure improvement in some key stage 2 classes have not yet had sufficient time to have an impact.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils in later key stage 2 classes are provided with activities which challenge them to further develop their knowledge and skills in mathematics
- pupils in later key stage 2 classes are provided with more opportunities to develop their extended writing skills in subjects across the wider curriculum, as well as in English
- all teachers use assessment information to plan work which is suitably challenging and supportive of all pupils with different abilities
- subject leaders act with greater urgency in response to their findings from monitoring work, in order to drive improvement more quickly and hold all teachers to account.

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

Yours sincerely

David Turner
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

- During this short inspection, I met with you, senior leaders and four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- I also met with five members of staff to discuss their safeguarding knowledge and training.
- Accompanied by yourself, I visited lessons in all year groups, looked at pupils' work in books and spoke with pupils throughout the day. I also held a meeting with pupils from key stage 2.
- I held a telephone meeting with the school's challenge partner, commissioned from VNET (Viscount Nelson Education Trust), an advisory organisation which supports Norfolk local authority schools.
- I reviewed school documentation, including the self-evaluation report and school improvement plan, assessment information, policies and information posted on the website.
- I scrutinised a range of documentation about the school's safeguarding work,

including the single central record, safeguarding training and leaders' systems for managing information.

- I took account of 33 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 28 free-text comments from parents and nine responses to the online staff questionnaire. I also took account of the 46 responses to the online pupil questionnaire and the views of 14 parents whom I met at the start of the school day.