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2 November 2016

Mrs Mary Langton  
Headteacher  
Appleton Primary School  
Appleton Road  
Hull  
HU5 4PG

Dear Mrs Langton

### **Short inspection of Appleton Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 October 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in June 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have acted swiftly to address areas for improvement recommended in the previous inspection report. Leaders and teachers have embraced the new national curriculum and used this as a benchmark to raise standards across the school. As a result, attainment has risen steadily for the last two years. In 2015 and 2016, from below-average starting points, pupils attained levels above national averages at the end of key stages 1 and 2. Two thirds of key stage 2 pupils attained the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics combined. Pupils at the end of both key stages made progress broadly in line with that seen nationally. In 2016, a higher proportion of pupils than seen nationally attained the Year 1 phonics check. This represents an improvement for the school for the last two years at both key stages.

You have ensured that all staff have received training that has enhanced their ability to deliver more exciting, well-pitched lessons in the classroom. Leaders have purchased resources to support learning in grammar and spelling and in mathematics. Teaching is much improved in these subjects, as proven by improved pupil attainment and good progress.

A new marking policy was quickly introduced to ensure that pupils understand the next steps in their learning. The marking policy has undergone several reviews since 2013 so that marking is now constructive in helping pupils to revise or improve their work. A school-wide push to improve the quality of pupils' presentation in their books has been successful so that, almost without exception, pupils take pride in

their work, forming handwriting neatly and spelling with a greater degree of accuracy.

You have ensured that teachers have regular opportunities to work with staff from different schools, to learn from others and to ensure assessment of pupils' work is accurate. Your work to monitor and evaluate the work of the school is effective in identifying where things are going well, but also in teasing out those areas of learning where improvements are needed. Frequent monitoring of all subjects takes into account pupils' views and looks in depth at the work pupils are producing in their books. Leaders are able to offer timely support to teachers if gaps in their practice are identified. There is growing consistency in the quality of teaching across the school as a consequence of actions taken by you and your senior leaders.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors are vigilant in their duty to keep pupils safe. The site is suitably secure and policies and procedures have been regularly reviewed to ensure that they reflect the latest safeguarding guidance. Staff have all been trained to identify pupils who may be at risk and have undertaken additional training to prevent pupils being at risk of radicalisation.

### **Inspection findings**

- The quality of teaching in school is effective in helping pupils to learn well. Questioning by some teachers and teaching assistants is highly successful in getting pupils to reflect on their learning and encouraging them to work things out for themselves. In the majority of lessons seen, teachers had carefully matched the task to pupils' ability so that no time was lost as pupils quickly worked their way through the activities. This was especially the case in mathematics lessons where pupils took on additional challenges, leading them to master skills and work at enhanced levels. The purchase of more challenging books has allowed pupils to read and develop their skills to a better level. In addition to this, the training of all staff has ensured that the teaching of reading has been much enhanced. However, in some classes there are missed opportunities to correct pupils' misconceptions, resulting in a slower rate of learning for the least able pupils.
- Owing to a rigorous monitoring programme, you have a very good understanding of the effectiveness of the school. You regularly use the expertise of consultants or other teachers and leaders from within the Innovative Creative Academic group of schools to reflect on how learning could be improved for Appleton pupils.
- Governors have been diligent in their role, regularly undertaking visits to monitor the impact of the work of leaders and teachers. They are ambitious, would like the school to improve further and have a good idea of how to make that happen. The majority of governors attend the pupil progress committee. They have a good picture of the progress and attainment of pupils throughout the school as a consequence of detailed reports made to the pupil progress committee by the headteacher.

- There is a high degree of satisfaction among staff with the direction they receive from leaders, and all staff are proud to work at the school. Although only a small number responded, the majority of parents expressed satisfaction with the work of the school.
- Careful checking by the school business manager ensures that funding given to the school to support disadvantaged pupils can be accounted for. The leader with oversight for disadvantaged pupils is very aware of the needs of individual pupils and plans interventions to help them to achieve. In general, disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils. However, the most able disadvantaged pupils are not consistently reaching the higher levels of which they are capable. School leaders have identified this and are already monitoring pupils' books to ensure that every opportunity is taken to help them to achieve.
- Teaching in the early years is effective in helping children to develop the skills they need to access the curriculum in Year 1. Responsive planning of the areas of provision, based on what children can do and understand, is helping all children, but boys in particular, to make good progress. As a result, the difference in achievement between boys and girls at the end of Reception is rapidly diminishing. Staff continually check children's understanding through well-chosen questions that encourage children to talk animatedly about their learning. Reading and writing are effectively encouraged through improved provision.
- The majority of school sport funding is spent on employing a specialist physical education teacher who has worked with teachers to raise standards and progress in sport across the school. Teachers' awareness of the need to provide specifically for gifted and talented pupils or those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is now improved as a result of additional training. The school delivers bespoke activities, such as the 'Change for Life' club to support some pupils and families in living a healthy lifestyle. Pupils enter a much wider range of local competitions, for example in badminton, rugby, athletics and rounders. These initiatives combine to ensure that pupils now get many more opportunities to take part in good-quality sports than in the past.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is good. Pupils really enjoy the companionship of others during social times, exhibiting well-developed social skills. They are proud of their school and value the opportunities they get to learn through a wide range of visits and clubs.
- The work of leaders to promote pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural understanding has been successful. The school environment reflects diversity and a wide range of cultures beyond those found in the school. Pupils spoken to talked animatedly about what it means to them to live in modern Britain. Teachers' efforts to plan and deliver a rich and varied curriculum mean that pupils are making good progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils are working at levels behind other pupils in key stage 1. Although the difference in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and that of others is diminishing by the end of key stage 2, the most able are not making the progress of which they are capable.

- Some disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were not attending school as regularly as they should, resulting in absence and persistent absence being above national averages. Leaders have regularly promoted good attendance, through class and individual rewards and through contact with individual parents. As a result of this concerted effort, attendance has risen to be broadly in line with national averages this term. Despite this, persistent absence remains too high due to a few families who are still regularly absent, missing valuable schooling as a consequence.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all groups of pupils make rapid progress, particularly the least able in reading and the most able disadvantaged by:
  - improving the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding and ensuring that no teaching is less than good
  - ensuring that all pupils are accessing teaching and activities at an appropriate level to help them make swift progress in lessons.
- they continue to work with families and carers to diminish the amount of persistent absence, ensuring that all pupils come to school regularly and on time.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this one-day inspection, I was able to discuss the work of the school with you and your staff. We visited classrooms together to observe teaching and learning. I was able to look at pupils' work in books and to speak with pupils throughout the day. Discussions with your school improvement partner and three members of the governing body helped to provide additional information. School documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website were also taken into account. I looked at the online questionnaire (Parent View) to gather the views of 16 parents about the school and examined results from the school's own questionnaire to parents. I also took into account the views of 28 staff and 12 pupils through online questionnaires.