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Mrs Ella Roberts  
Headteacher  
Thringstone Primary School  
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Leicestershire  
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Dear Mrs Roberts

### **Short inspection of Thringstone Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 28 June 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 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. You have continued to insist on high expectations for all pupils. You work well with governors to ensure that you identify and address any weaknesses. Staff that I met during my visit told me how you continually challenge them to improve, and provide them with valuable opportunities for professional development. As a result, staff have become knowledgeable about, for instance, the greater challenges of the revised national curriculum. They are also skilled in judging pupils' progress using the new assessment system, which you and senior leaders have chosen, to measure outcomes. Staff I met believe that you lead and manage the school well and they are clear about their responsibility to ensure that all pupils in their class make good progress.

The arrangements that you have in place for teachers' appraisal are effective. You set targets that you link clearly to improvements in classroom performance, along with targets to increase teachers' own effectiveness in, for example, subject leadership.

You recognise the benefits for you and your staff of collaborating with colleagues in other schools. For this reason, you have developed effective relationships with the Forest Way Teaching School Alliance, a collaborative partnership and the Coalville family of schools. These links have given you opportunities to check that the assessments that your staff are making of pupils' work are accurate as well as, for

instance, to improve transition arrangements with the secondary schools that your pupils go on to attend.

The governing body plays an effective strategic role in holding you and senior leaders to account for all aspects of the school's work, and in ensuring that the outcomes for all groups of pupils are good. It undertakes detailed monitoring work on particular aspects, such as the progress of disadvantaged pupils. However, not all of the areas of less effective provision are then formally included in the school development plan. For example, when governors' monitoring showed that teachers do not consistently implement the school marking policy, leaders did not add actions to the plan to address this. In addition, the timescales for actions in the school development plan are also vague. Similarly, the plan does not show who should check that the actions have taken place, along with when and how. This risks the actions for further improvement occurring later than they should, and constrains governors' ability to evaluate fully their success.

You are aware that, last year, the proportion of pupils who passed the Year 1 phonics screening check was below the national average. In addition, pupils in Year 6 who were not disadvantaged made significantly less progress in mathematics, compared with other pupils nationally. This was because, due to unavoidable staffing changes, pupils did not receive consistently effective teaching. You have acted to address this effectively. New subject leadership, and good teaching, is improving rates of progress across key stage 1, where progress had also slowed. Because of better teaching, the proportion of pupils who have passed this year's Year 1 phonics screening check has risen substantially, and has been restored to levels similar to the national average. Information provided by you shows that pupils' progress in mathematics has accelerated considerably in key stage 2.

Pupils' work that I looked at during my visit confirms that their overall progress in English and mathematics in all key stages is good and improving. However, the most able pupils do not make the progress they should do. In the preceding two years, no pupils attained a Level 6, which was the previous highest measure of attainment. Work that I looked at during my visit showed that, in too many cases, the most able pupils receive the same work as other pupils, rather than tasks that will consistently challenge them deeply.

During my visit, I met a selection of pupils from most year groups in your school. They told me that they enjoy the lessons because teachers make learning fun. They also explained how, if someone does not understand an aspect of their work, or finds the subject difficult, staff give them extra help to improve. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good. They listen respectfully to adults and work hard in lessons. They also cooperate well in class, and play happily and safely together at lunchtime and breaktimes. On the day of my visit, I saw pupils greatly enjoying themselves outdoors, using the spacious grounds and school field, with many physical activities available to help them to stay fit and healthy.

Parents that I met at the end of the day were unanimously positive about all aspects of the school. They confirmed that you led and managed the school well, with one summing up the views of others by explaining how 'nothing is too much trouble'. They told me that your staff were approachable and how, because of good

teaching, they felt their children were making good progress at your school. The positive views these parents gave were reflected in the returns to your recent parental questionnaire, and in most of the responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire. All parents responding said that they would recommend the school to others. A very small proportion of parents have expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the school's current homework arrangements. You plan to address this, and the school's approach to homework, with the governing body shortly.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Pupils are safe at Thringstone because you place the highest importance on the protection of pupils. You ensure that staff in all roles are trained well to be able to understand the different forms of abuse and neglect, and can identify the warning signs that might indicate that a child is being harmed. You have completed an assessment of pupils' risk of radicalisation, and staff have undertaken training about extremism, with further training scheduled for next term. The school systems you have in place ensure that pupils are safeguarded effectively. During my visit, I looked at a random sample of pupils' files of concerns and referrals. These show that you keep a very clear chronology of concerns. You also take brisk action to address these issues and, where necessary, make prompt reviews to external agencies, including social care. You and the governing body also ensure that sufficient persons are trained in safer recruitment, and that at least one trained person is included in all interviews for new staff.

Pupils who I met with during my visit told me how, although bullying and name-calling do occur occasionally, instances are rare. They explained that, whenever it does happen, staff deal with it quickly and fairly. They said that they felt very safe in school, because they get on well together and that, if anyone was worried, they could easily approach any grown-up at the school to help them. They told me how teachers help them to protect themselves from things that might cause them harm. They had particularly warm words for the regular visits from the local police community support officer (PCSO), who visits the school regularly to inform pupils about, for instance, the risks of fireworks, roads and strangers. He has developed good relationships with pupils, often sitting with them in the hall for school lunch together. Pupils listen to the PCSO and take note of his advice. They understand the importance of keeping themselves safe, as well as the need for everyone to uphold the law.

### **Inspection findings**

- Your thoughtful and well-considered analysis of a wide range of evidence has led you to correctly judge all areas of the school to be good. You are determined that all staff will work together to ensure that Thringstone continues to improve for the benefit of all its pupils.
- The governing body also has a sound knowledge of both the school's strengths and why it is not yet outstanding. As well as giving you strong support,

governors hold you and senior leaders fully to account. Governors challenge you rigorously to improve outcomes for pupils.

- Governors ensure that they receive regular, and highly useful, professional development so that they can keep abreast of, for example, changes in the curriculum or safeguarding requirements. In addition, they ensure that pupils are safe by, for instance, checking risk assessments and by examining the security of the school site. In addition, they monitor the school budget well and ensure that expenditure is appropriate.
- New, effective leadership of both English and mathematics has improved the rate of pupils' progress in these subjects. The subject leaders for English are ensuring that teachers in key stage 1 teach phonics (the sounds that letters make) effectively. The subject leader for mathematics has helped teachers to improve their skills, supporting them to, for example, use a shared approach to calculation.
- The majority of children who enter the school in the Reception Year do so with levels of development below those typically found in children of the same age. They get off to a good start and, by the time they leave the early years, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is broadly in line with the national average. Children I saw during my visit were undertaking activities such as practising their writing together and hunting for mini-beasts in the garden area. Children show a curiosity about the natural world and are expected to find a range of ways to do things such as, for example, trying out different tools to dig in the soil.
- Disadvantaged pupils in the school are making rates of progress that are at least as good as, and in many cases better than, those of other pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make progress that is at least good from their starting points.
- Work that I looked at during my visit shows that you have not ensured that all teachers consistently follow the marking policy that they have agreed. Teachers do not consistently give pupils specific advice they need to improve aspects of their work. As a result, although pupils' progress is good overall, it is not rapid.
- Pupils' attendance is improving and is currently above the national average. Governors monitor attendance particularly closely, and check that you ensure that pupils attend school regularly. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is small, and below the national average.
- Relationships between staff and pupils, and pupils' attitudes to learning, are good. Pupils listen respectfully to instructions and complete their tasks as asked. Teaching assistants support learning well and help those pupils who need to catch up.
- The school's website meets the requirements on the publication of specified information that are set out in the school's funding agreement.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the most able pupils make rapid progress and attain highly by consistently being given work that challenges them fully
- all teachers follow the school's marking policy, and give pupils clear next steps to improve
- weaknesses found during monitoring work by governors are included in the school development plan
- the school development plan includes precise timings for action, along with who will monitor actions, and how.

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

Yours sincerely

**Roary Pownall**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and representatives of the governing body. We visited classes in all key stages to observe learning. I looked at pupils' work from different year groups across the school. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and met with groups of them at breaktime. I considered the views of 15 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, alongside the school's most recent questionnaire. I also met with parents at the end of the school day. I read a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, your school development plan and information on outcomes for pupils currently in the school. I visited the breakfast club, which is maintained by the governing body, to check that pupils were safe. I studied information related to attendance, anonymised examples of teachers' appraisal and examined safeguarding records and policies. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information set out in its funding agreement. I met staff and discussed with them their opinions of the school and its leadership.