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Mrs Alison Buddle
Headteacher
Shepeau Stow Primary School
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Dear Mrs Buddle

Short inspection of Shepeau Stow Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 March 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders promote a strong, caring culture and every pupil is highly valued and known well by you and your staff. Consequently, support for pupils is effective. In this very small school you and your staff work closely as a team. Parents have high regard for the quality of care their children receive. As one parent commented: 'Staff are very welcoming and helpful, I could not wish for a better school.'

School leaders have a clear strategic overview of what is required to shape and drive the future of the school. The governing body provides effective support and challenge. They are knowledgeable and regularly monitor the actions taken by leaders to secure improvements.

Teachers and other staff have created a positive climate for learning. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are good. Pupils are enthusiastic and confident learners, particularly in the Reception and Year 1 class. For example, the inspector observed Reception pupils confidently using their mathematical vocabulary while playing in the outside area.

You have been effective in tackling the issues identified for improvement at the last inspection. You have worked with leaders of other schools to improve standards within a group of schools. The sharing of expertise, to improve teaching and

knowledge of assessment, has helped teachers to plan more effectively the subsequent lessons for pupils. A review of pupils' books with your assistant headteacher showed me that pupils make good progress. However, presentation of pupils' work is inconsistent. You agreed that this is an area of development for the school.

After the previous inspection, you reviewed the curriculum to raise the profile of reading and amend the way in which it was taught. You ensured that quality texts are now studied in depth and linked to other areas of the curriculum. I saw older pupils writing autobiographies linked to *Oliver Twist* and Year 1 pupils told me about the models they had made which were linked to fairy tales. Pupils say they enjoy reading, including when they use new technology like electronic devices. They talk enthusiastically about stories they love.

Leaders also created more opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects. Nevertheless, your mathematics leader has correctly identified that pupils need to further develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in key stage 2.

Pupils are knowledgeable about e-safety. You work with pupils and their families to highlight the dangers of using the internet. Pupils were able to explain risks when playing games online. They also told me about the importance of keeping personal details private.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You make sure that the safeguarding of pupils is effective and a high priority. The required checks are made so that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff receive the appropriate training, including protecting pupils from extremism and radicalisation. You have been careful to make plans to protect pupils even if you are not on the school site. You and your staff know your pupils exceptionally well, so are alert to the things that make them vulnerable. Staff are vigilant and records show that you take decisive and prompt action when it is needed to secure their well-being.

Pupils are taught effectively about everyday risks and know how to manage these in a sensible way. Pupils who I spoke to said that they felt safe in school. They told me that bullying and name-calling are extremely rare but, when it does happen, staff deal with it quickly and fairly. Parents told me that you do everything possible to ensure that their children are safe, happy and well. The school site is secure, safe and welcoming and yet still manages to embrace the surrounding countryside for the best benefit of the pupils.

Inspection findings

- Achievement in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 was lower for the most able pupils than it was in reading and writing. Consequently, leaders have made changes to mathematics to support the learning of problem solving and reasoning. You acknowledge that the impact of this is inconsistent and more frequent opportunities to practice these skills are needed in key stage 2.
- In 2014, the pupils now in Year 3 achieved a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year. The good start made to their education was not sustained through to the end of Year 2. However, you have rightly identified that this was due to previous low expectations of pupils in teaching and learning. You reacted by restructuring staffing arrangements, improving teaching and introducing specific interventions to support pupils. Pupils' workbooks and current information on the progress of pupils in Year 3 show that your actions are supporting pupils well.
- Pupils say they enjoy reading and also mention using other forms of media to read, such as electronic devices. They talk enthusiastically about stories they love. Pupils in Reception and Year 1 use their phonics skills well to read.
- Teachers now keep a more consistent check on pupils' learning in lessons.
- You have raised awareness of the importance of regular attendance at school, so that pupils learn and achieve well. You work with families to reduce persistent absences. This positive reinforcement of attendance is leading to improvement. Nevertheless, you continue to be rigorous in your checking of attendance and consult outside agencies when necessary.
- The proportion of children who attain a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has declined over the last two years. You have responded by improving teaching and the quality of learning. You have ensured that pupils benefit from continuous indoor and outdoor opportunities to learn. Provision is effective and there is a 'buzz' of excitement and enthusiasm to learn. Staff in Reception are tracking the progress of children; however, you realise this needs to happen more regularly in order to inform the next steps in their learning and help them to make faster progress.
- Parents who talked with me during my visit spoke very positively about the school. They praised the school's caring culture and said that concerns, however small, are listened to carefully and dealt with swiftly. One parent said, reflecting the views of many: 'All staff know the children very well and therefore give consistent routines, boundaries and responses.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there are consistently high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work across all subjects and year groups
- pupils in key stage 2 have more opportunities to practise their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics
- proposed plans to improve tracking of progress and achievement of early years pupils are frequent and rigorous so that pupils make faster progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Innes-Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the assistant head teacher and mathematics leader, the leader of the early years, two representatives of the governing body and a group of pupils. I visited all three classes to see pupils and staff at work. I sampled pupils' work and met support staff and midday supervisors. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, at lunchtime, breaktime and during lessons. I met a number of parents informally at the beginning of the school day and considered the views of 25 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I evaluated a range of documents, including safeguarding records, attendance, behaviour information and information regarding external reviews and policies.