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Mrs Tracy McConnell
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs McConnell

Short inspection of Asfordby Hill Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 May 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 January 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 ensured that the culture of continuous improvement has continued since Asfordby Hill became an academy in 2013. You have a deep knowledge of the strengths of the school, and both you and your staff know pupils very well. You also use your skills to support other headteachers locally, as the chair of a local primary school network.

You are held in high regard by staff, who work together in shared ways to ensure pupils receive both care and a high-quality education. Staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire unanimously believe that Asfordby Hill is a calm and orderly place that is aspirational for all its pupils. Middle leaders give you good support, checking the quality of teaching and the gains that pupils are making in different subjects. They then report this to you and to members of the governing body. These leaders also ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils are accurate.

Governors are effective. They understand their responsibilities and play an effective, active strategic role in ensuring that pupils make progress that is at least good, and that attainment remains high. They have regular discussions with subject leaders to check whether improvements are having the impact needed. They monitor the school budget effectively, and ensure that pupils are safe by, for example, examining risk assessments and ensuring that the school site is secure. Though they have a good overall understanding of pupils' outcomes, this understanding is not yet precise. This is because you and your staff are using a new assessment

system and, as a result, you have not given the governors current details of the progress and attainment in different year groups and subjects. They are not therefore able to hold you to account as effectively as they could.

You have also ensured that the school environment reflects your high aspirations. Classrooms and corridors display many examples of exceptional two- and three-dimensional artwork that reflect and celebrate your pupils' skills and creative talents, as well as their progress in the wider curriculum. These displays include a life-sized, replica ancient Egyptian sarcophagus and mummy, proudly displayed in the school hall.

The exciting, broad curriculum that your staff provide makes pupils eager to learn. Topics have history-based themes that make learning come alive. For example, pupils in key stage 1 learn about, among many other things, both dinosaurs and Florence Nightingale in 'The Good, the Bad and the Extinct!' In key stage 2, through the topic 'Reinventing the Wheel' pupils find out about magnets and forces, and the culture of Stone Age Britain. The curriculum is enriched with clubs that keep pupils healthy and that capture their interest. These include unusual sporting clubs, such as fishing. In addition, you ensure that pupils' musical skills are nurtured, with pupils learning at least three instruments during their time at your school.

As a result of effective teaching, pupils make good progress from their starting points. They leave well prepared for the next stage of their education with skill levels that are at least in line with, and often higher than, those nationally. Pupils' progress in mathematics is particularly rapid. Actions in your school development plan show that you are working effectively to ensure that pupils' gains in writing accelerate to match this. You have also spent the school's pupil premium funding effectively to ensure that the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others are closing. This is because disadvantaged pupils are making at least as much progress as, or more than, other pupils.

Pupils leave your school as reflective, caring and moral young people. This is because all staff reflect the attitudes and behaviours they expect from pupils. You ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely good. Pupils understand and respect cultures and faiths different from their own, and cooperate closely. Pupils display very positive attitudes to their learning and show caring attitudes to each other. Pupils I met told me how proud they are to be members of the school.

Your approach, the dedication of staff and the quality of teaching has resulted in parents holding your school in high regard, and applications to the school are rising as its reputation increases. One parent who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, explained how Asfordby Hill is a 'fantastic school that parents clamber to get their children in'.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff know that the protection of your pupils is critical. You have ensured that staff are trained effectively in knowing the different forms of abuse and that they understand the warning signs which suggest that a child may be being harmed. Staff know the procedure to report any concern they have. You ensure that staff are recruited safely, and the school's central register meets requirements. During my visit, I examined samples of the most recent referrals you have made to external agencies. These show that you keep good records and that these referrals are made promptly to protect pupils. The school's safeguarding policy is fit for purpose, though you are attending to a minor adjustment to update the name of the governor who has a responsibility to check safeguarding procedures.

Pupils I met during my visit were very keen to tell me that they felt safe in school. They told me how staff teach them about the potential risks they may face. During my visit I saw this for myself, with pupils in Year 6 learning about the dangers of medicines and drugs in the 'life education caravan' that visits the school annually. Parents who responded to Parent View confirmed unanimously that their children are safe in school and well looked after by staff.

Inspection findings

- You provide high-quality leadership that benefits not only your school but others too. For example, you are chair of a local primary school network and support other local headteachers with aspects such as planning, assessment and lesson observation. You lead your school with integrity and are, justifiably, highly regarded for your approach and deeply respected for your effectiveness.
- Your school development plan is effective because it addresses those aspects of the school that need further improvement, such as pupils' writing, and reading for the most able pupils.
- Procedures for managing the performance of staff are effective. All teachers and teaching assistants are given targets to improve further the work that they do. Governors check that any salary increases for teachers are justified by those teachers meeting their targets and improving their classroom performance. Staff are given good-quality training to improve their skills, and those teachers who are new to teaching, or who are less confident, are supported well.
- Parents who responded to Parent View expressed highly positive views of all aspects of the school. A very large majority think that pupils are well behaved and that the school responds well to any concerns. Parents unanimously agreed that the school was well led and managed, that pupils are taught well and that their child makes good progress. One parent explained how, since starting school, 'my boy has come on in leaps and bounds'. Another told how her daughter 'loves school and is disappointed when the weekend comes'. Parents also expressed unanimous support for the headteacher and said that they would recommend the school to others.
- Children enter the Reception class with skill levels below those typically found in children of the same age. They make good progress and the proportion of

pupils who achieve a good level of development is in line with the national average. Pupils' good progress continues in key stage 1 and 2 and, by the end of Year 6, pupils leave with skill levels that are in line with, or above, those of other pupils nationally. Last year, the proportion of pupils making the progress expected of them, and more than this, was in line with, or above, the national average. This continues to be the case for pupils currently in the school.

- During my visit, I examined a considerable amount of pupils' written work from all year groups. This confirms that pupils' progress is good overall. Pupils make rapid gains in mathematics, showing a quickly increasing confidence in using and applying number. In Year 1, for example, pupils are partitioning numbers into 10s and 1s. By Year 2, they are becoming proficient in subtracting two-digit numbers. The oldest pupils are solving complex equations in algebra and other particularly challenging mathematical problems.
- Though pupils' progress in writing is not as fast as it is in mathematics, it is nevertheless nothing less than good. For example, pupils in Year 1 recently wrote to a visiting palaeontologist, using the correct style and showing their growing flair and creativity. In Year 6, pupils are using their secure knowledge of grammar and language to write engagingly in a wide variety of ways. One Year 6 pupil had written, 'His bloodshot eyes laughed in glee and he let out an ominous roar that – if anyone had happened to be nearby – would have sent shivers down their backs'.
- Pupils make good progress in science. They are given regular, practical opportunities to investigate and to record their results in a variety of ways. Teachers ensure that, while giving guidance to pupils where needed, they give opportunities for pupils to think for themselves and make appropriate choices when undertaking their work.
- You are ensuring that teaching is good or better in almost all classes. Where it is not, you are addressing this effectively. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. They question pupils effectively about what they know, and give them work that is both challenging and that meets their needs. Where pupils do not understand what they are being taught, teachers quickly note this and give them support to help them catch up. Due to the high quality of teaching overall, pupils are industrious and make good progress.
- Good teaching begins in Reception, where adults ask children questions that make them think. For example, in one lesson I saw, pupils were being asked, 'Why do you think that the mouse will be the Gruffalo's friend?' Children listen to adults and respect them from an early age.
- Pupils behave extremely well both in lessons and around the school. They have excellent attitudes to their learning, work hard and show respect to their classmates and to staff. They are polite to visitors and help each other. For example, pupils in Year 6 show children who are new to the Reception class how to line up sensibly and have their lunch together. They also help younger pupils to play games at breaktimes.
- Pupils rarely fall out, but when it happens staff encourage them to think of their own solutions first in order to resolve disagreements. This helps pupils to be reflective, resourceful and independent. However, pupils say that if they need to they can approach any member of staff if they are worried about anything.

Pupils say that bullying and name-calling are very rare and that staff deal with them effectively and very quickly.

- Many pupils have taken up the school's new 'Citizenship Scheme'. Pupils undertake responsibilities at school, such as having good attendance and tidying shared areas, and at home by, for example, making their bed and keeping their bedrooms tidy. Older pupils hold responsibilities within the community by, for example, raising money for charity. All pupils in Year 5 and 6 are trained in first aid so that they can help someone else if they are injured.
- Pupils have a good understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils I met during my visit told me how it is important for them to follow the school's rules, and why the law helps protect people. They showed respect for other people, faiths and cultures and told me that they think it is a good thing that everyone is different. They enjoy taking part in the many opportunities to express their opinions and, for example, to elect members of the school council.
- Attendance at the school is consistently high and is above the national average. Pupils enjoy attending and no pupils are currently persistently absent.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- together, they examine pupils' current outcomes in different year groups and subjects, in order that governors can hold leaders even more effectively to account for the progress that pupils are making.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education, 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, representatives of the governing body and the lead teacher for assessment. We visited all classes to observe teaching and learning. I looked at pupils' work across the school. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and met with groups of them at breaktime. I considered the views of 29 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, alongside the school's most recent questionnaire. 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 and 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. I evaluated the range of views expressed by staff, through Ofsted's questionnaire, about the school and its leadership.