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Mr Paul Bargh
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Dear Mr Bargh

Short inspection of New York Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 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 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

New York Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized school, currently with 35 pupils. It is federated with the nearby Frithville Primary School. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than seen in other primary schools. The proportion of pupils who join, or leave, the school during their primary school years is also much higher than seen nationally. Because of these and other factors, it is not reasonable to consider trends in your school's outcomes other than by looking closely at individual pupils and the progress they make. You do this in detail. You and the small staff team know the pupils and the families well.

Pupils throughout the school respectfully acknowledge that several of their peers have particular needs. They embrace the inclusive culture you have created and support each other very well. Parents spoke highly of the support their children get from staff to help them succeed. Pupils told me that they get the help they need with aspects of their learning that they find challenging. One pupil told me, 'It doesn't matter what you struggle with, New York is a haven for everyone.'

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to ensure that work set for pupils is at just the right level for them; that teachers insist on high standards of presentation; and that younger pupils develop their independent learning skills.

Since then, you have made changes to the younger pupils' classroom so that they can make better use of equipment, making choices for themselves about what they want to use to help them learn and explore. Pupils who were writing sentences were able to tell me what they had to do. As we observed lessons in both classes and looked at pupils' books, we saw that teachers match work to the abilities of pupils well. They do not always step in quickly enough, however, particularly in mathematics, to move pupils on to more challenging work. This results in pupils sometimes completing work that they find too easy.

The leader with responsibility for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities keeps a very close check on the progress these pupils are making. She meets regularly with teachers and parents to plan precisely the next steps in pupils' learning. She has forged links with external agencies to provide additional advice and guidance where this is needed or would be helpful. She checks that the interventions and support that pupils' receive are having the desired effect.

Overall, pupils' attendance is below the national average. There are specific reasons for some of this low attendance, but not all of it. You offer awards for pupils who attend school every day, but too many pupils still do not come to school regularly enough.

Governors are committed to, and care about, the school. They are ambitious for the pupils to do their best and for the school to continue to improve. You and the governing body have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. You use this information to plan improvements, both across the federation and for the needs of New York Primary School specifically.

You ensure that pupils benefit from a range of experiences to enhance their learning and broaden their horizons. For example, pupils can undertake several residential visits during their time at New York Primary, to areas of the country that are divergent geographically, such as the Lake District and the coastal town of Whitby. You arrange for visitors to school to talk to pupils about their lives and experiences. Pupils told me that they particularly enjoyed listening to a Commander from the Royal Air Force and a Paralympic athlete.

You also ensure that pupils' cultural development is well promoted. Pupils learn to play musical instruments, such as the samba drums. They visit the theatre in Lincoln, have the opportunity for a trip to London and learn about cultures and religions that are different from their own. Pupils participate in a wide range of sporting opportunities, such as football, basketball, rugby, tennis and rounders. They are proud to be able to represent their school in competitions and tournaments.

Parents who spoke with me, or shared their views using the online survey, are highly supportive of the school. Every parent would recommend the school to others. In particular, they praised how well their children are cared for and how well staff communicate with them about their children.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding has a very high priority at New York Primary School. You ensure that staff receive the most up-to-date training so that they know the signs of potential abuse. You make sure that staff receive regular updates and information throughout the school year so they know how to raise a concern about a child's welfare, should one arise. You ensure that all the appropriate vetting checks are undertaken when a member of staff or volunteer joins the school.

Parents all agree that their children are safe in school. Pupils feel safe. They told me that they are taught how to keep themselves safe when they use modern technology and go online. Pupils also told me that every child learns to swim, even those who join the school towards the end of their primary years. They told me that this is very important because the area where they live is characterised by farmland surrounded by ditches that fill with water. They know that you and your staff help to keep them safe both in school and outside.

Pupils also told me that while bullying sometimes happens in school, it was not frequent. They know how to identify bullying of different types and they are confident that an adult would deal with it for them, swiftly and successfully.

Inspection findings

- Work in pupils' books showed that current pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Pupils' handwriting, their use of punctuation and their ability to write more complex sentences improve as they use the skills they have been taught. For example, one pupil in Year 6 had written, 'As the hot sun set over the horizon, the pale blue moon began to control the sky...'. However, teachers are not reliably insisting that the pupils use these skills to the same high standard when they write across a range of subjects.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Teachers make the purpose of the learning very clear to them and pupils in the key stage 2 class were able to explain what they were learning, how it fitted in with other lessons and why it was important.
- Pupils read well. Younger pupils at the early stages of reading use their skills in letter recognition to sound out unfamiliar words. As pupils increase their confidence as readers, they read fluently and with expression. You have ensured that a library van visits the school so that the school's stock of books can be replenished regularly. Pupils help to choose which books they have in school.
- Leadership of subjects is shared across the federation of two schools, but it is not well developed. While leaders undertake some activities to check the quality of provision in some subjects, they do not follow up on their findings to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement quickly enough.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- subject leaders develop their leadership skills, so that governors can hold them to account for improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in their area of responsibility
- they work more extensively with parents to improve pupils' rates of attendance
- pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is accelerated by teachers:
 - insisting that pupils use their spelling and punctuation skills accurately when they write at length in all subjects
 - intervening quickly to move pupils on to more challenging work.

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

Di Mullan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the leaders with responsibility for English and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities across the federation. I listened to two pupils read and I spoke with pupils informally in class and more formally in a group at lunchtime. I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school and considered the 10 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I visited both classes with you to see the learning that was taking place. You and I examined a range of pupils' books together. I spoke with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone. I considered a range of school documentation, including the federation's improvement plan, minutes of meetings of the governing body, a report from the local authority's adviser, data from the school's assessment system and information relating to the safeguarding of pupils.