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29 March 2018

Mr Duncan White  
Headteacher  
Holly Primary School  
Holly Drive  
Forest Town  
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Nottinghamshire  
NG19 0NT

Dear Mr White

### **Short inspection of Holly Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 March 2018, 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 June 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is led very well, managed very effectively and organised efficiently. It is, justifiably, very popular with and held in high regard by parents and carers.

The pupils make good progress over the course of their time at the school. Their progress in mathematics is particularly strong, including in the early years.

You have tackled the areas for improvement from the inspection in a well-considered and carefully planned way. You have emphasised continuous professional development for the staff, in order to bring about improvements.

The support, training and various other opportunities that the staff have received have helped you to secure notable improvements in the quality of teaching. You have, for example, improved the ways in which the teachers assess the pupils' work. The teachers now ensure that the guidance and feedback given to the pupils has a clear impact on the pupils' learning.

The staff know the pupils well as individuals. You all have a good understanding of specific things that hold back some of the pupils. The school tailors the support for individuals who need additional help with their learning. The pupils are supported well in lessons.

The teachers make the lessons engaging and interesting for the pupils. They keep a 'weather eye' on how well individual pupils are doing in the lessons. They pitch questions for individual pupils precisely, based upon what they know about the pupils' abilities. They routinely test out what the pupils have learned or understood, and skilfully push the pupils, in order to extend or to deepen their learning, both during discussions in lessons and when commenting on the pupils' written work. This is done more effectively in mathematics than it is in the teaching of writing.

The consistency throughout the school of the quality of the teaching of mathematics is impressive. It reflects the high priority that you have given and the concerted action that you have taken to implement the changes in the mathematics curriculum.

The teachers provide very good opportunities for the pupils to explain their thinking verbally in mathematics lessons. They show patience, allowing the pupils time to formulate their answers, and attention to detail in picking out key learning points from what the pupils say. In the lessons that I visited, the girls' confidence and skills in explaining themselves were more highly developed than the boys'.

The staff in the early years assess the children's learning comprehensively. They collect and record carefully a considerable amount of detail. They make good links with the children's families, so that their records contain and assessments take into account information from things that the children do out of school. As a result, the staff have a clear understanding of the children's particular learning needs. They adapt the curriculum well so that it meets the children's needs effectively.

The early years provides a rich and well-organised environment, in which the children are able to learn. The staff exploit the extensive and varied range of learning opportunities in the well-kept outdoor areas very well. This makes a major contribution to the children's learning.

The make-up of the pupils entering the school is changing. For example, the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is increasing, including among the children in the early years. The provision at the school does not currently reflect the learning needs of that group as well as it reflects those of other groups.

The governing body is well informed. It checks routinely on the quality of the school's work and questions senior leaders effectively. It is not incisive enough in evaluating all aspects of the school's work.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The governing body checks regularly and thoroughly on the school's work to safeguard the pupils.

The school's records are detailed and of good quality. The school records information carefully, so that a picture can be built up over time for each pupil.

The staff know and use the school's policies and procedures for reporting any concern that they may have. They understand their responsibilities. They are alert to potential concerns, whether seemingly minor, or obviously important. As a result, the pupils' needs and circumstances are known very well. The school works closely with families and with other local services, so that pupils who need help get it.

The pupils feel safe and happy at the school. They are taught about ways in which to keep themselves safe, such as when using the internet.

### **Inspection findings**

- The pupils' behaviour is typically good. They are well motivated for learning. They listen respectfully to each other in group discussions and when one of them has been asked by a teacher to explain something.
- The very successful pupils' choir is a defining feature of the school. It encapsulates the school's approach to providing a broad and balanced curriculum and symbolises its approach to drawing parents into the life of the school.
- The school pays careful attention to the needs of individual pupils. For example, it uses 'podcasts' to help the pupils to continue learning with the class during the long periods of unavoidable absence.
- The school ensures that pupils who lack opportunities to read widely out of school are provided with what they need to make up for that.
- The teaching of mathematics emphasises problem-solving and reasoning skills. The pupils become very confident in explaining their reasoning and do so using the correct terminology fluently. They become adept at spotting for themselves and correcting their errors. The boys lacked the vocabulary and fluency to be able to explain their answers in lessons as well as the girls, though they clearly understood the work.
- The pupils are less skilled at identifying and correcting errors in their written work than they are in mathematics.
- The proportions of children in the early years reaching the expected levels in reading and in writing have fallen in recent years. Though it has been largely sustained since the last inspection, the proportion of children overall achieving a good level of development by the end of the early years is not quite keeping pace with the improvements in the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged children achieving a good level of development has fallen.
- The school's work to develop its provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is at an early stage.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the pupils are as able to identify and to correct errors in their writing as they are in mathematics
- the boys develop the confidence and the skills to be able to express their views verbally to the best of their abilities
- the provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language reflects the best practice in supporting their learning needs.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

The inspection focused on the provision in the early years, the support for individual pupils, the teaching of mathematics, and the evaluation of the impact of the school's work by the governing body. During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior staff at the school, the leaders responsible for English, for mathematics, and for the early years, and the designated leaders for safeguarding. I met with members of the governing body. I made a series of visits to lessons, accompanied by you, visiting all classrooms. I discussed the work of the school with pupils during lessons. I looked at examples of the pupils' work during lessons and reviewed examples of their workbooks. I looked at the views of parents expressed using the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and in the school's own survey. I looked at the results of the inspection surveys for the pupils and the staff. I scrutinised various documents, including safeguarding and behaviour records, a range of policy documents, and records of governors' meetings.