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16 January 2019

Miss Claudia Frost  
Headteacher  
Little Stanion Primary School  
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Dear Miss Frost

### **Short inspection of Little Stanion Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 January 2019, 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 2015.

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

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

You were appointed as the headteacher since the last inspection and have built a new senior leadership team, some of whom are recently appointed to their roles. The chair of governors is new to post and responsibilities within the governing body have changed. Throughout this time of change, you have worked with other leaders and staff to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is effective, and that pupils' behaviour remains a strength of the school.

The team of staff are motivated and feel well supported by leaders as they seek to develop their subject responsibilities. Their knowledge of what the school does well and what it could do to improve is accurate. Staff share their practice with each other, for example to increase the range of cross-curricular writing that takes place.

The school environment is vibrant and reflects the breadth of the curriculum offered. Leaders have pursued an approach to learning which encourages discussion and debate. Engaging questions such as 'Did the 1960s change the world?' provide pupils with opportunities to explore ideas and respond through vibrant artwork, dance and historical research. Leaders organise learning so that, for some lessons, older and younger pupils work together. Pupils enjoy discussing open-ended questions and listen to each other's opinions with respect.

Pupils that I spoke with described the school as 'a warm and friendly family'. They felt well supported at school. They were excited by challenges and were keen to succeed, and they also valued the quality of relationships across the school. Pupils listen to each other and they feel listened to in turn. They cooperate well with each other in class and behave responsibly around the school. They welcome new pupils and act as positive role models to others. Parents and carers that I spoke with, and those who responded to the online survey, indicated that their children were very happy to come to school each day.

Pupils enjoy being active and explain how the 'Morning Mile' helps them to keep fit and concentrate better when they return to class. Older pupils relish positions of responsibility, such as running the healthy snack trolley. They enjoy reading with younger pupils at lunchtime and organising games on the playground so that there are different games that they can get involved with each day. They are interested in the world around them and enjoy caring for the school goats.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to improve the quality of teaching and learning through ensuring that pupils know how they can improve their work. Leaders have worked together with staff to establish a consistent approach to feedback. Pupils respond well to tackling their next steps for learning through answering a challenging question or explaining their thinking. Pupils can explain how targets that they wear round their necks help them to make their work better. They also understand how reading regularly and practising their knowledge of times tables help them to read with greater understanding and answer questions faster. Some are working hard to improve their handwriting and achieve their 'pen licence', but presentation is not yet consistent throughout the school.

The areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection also focused on improving opportunities for pupils to write at length and use their basic skills in a range of subjects and for different purposes. Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks showed that pupils have many engaging opportunities to write for a range of purposes across all subjects. For example, pupils write about the experiments that they have been involved with in science. They can explain whether the climate of Africa would be suitable for penguins. Examples of high-quality writing from all age groups are displayed with pride around the school. The most able pupils write fluently and at length, shaping their writing to match the task. However, not all teachers expect pupils to maintain high standards in all their writing. Pupils do not always use the skills and knowledge that they are gaining during English lessons when they write in other subjects.

Pupils work well together to solve problems in mathematics. These are often related to real-life situations. Older pupils used examples of income and expenditure from a family budget to work out whether the bank balance was in credit or deficit at the end of the month. Pupils in lower key stage 2 related negative numbers to the weather to demonstrate that they understood that  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  is colder than  $-1^{\circ}\text{C}$ . This helped the pupils to understand negative numbers better. Leaders have provided staff training about reasoning and there are more opportunities for pupils to prove

why they think that a statement is right or wrong. However, this approach has not yet become fully embedded.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all the safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders have established procedures to systematically log concerns. They monitor the well-being of vulnerable pupils carefully. Leaders work closely with other agencies to meet pupils' needs and have challenged them where they felt that further action was needed.

Pupils feel safe at school and say that the staff are caring and supportive. Staff help the pupils to understand how to stay safe. Pupils know not to disclose personal information online and how to report a message that upsets them. They learn how to stay safe when crossing roads. Pupils who I spoke with did not feel that there was any bullying but were confident that any issues would be swiftly resolved. They explained that any worries and concerns can be posted into 'Bothered Bob the worry eater', which makes staff aware of any problems that need to be sorted out. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, felt that their children were safe and well cared for.

### **Inspection findings**

- An increasing proportion of pupils start Nursery and Reception with communication skills below those typically found in their peers. Staff have changed their planning to increase the opportunities for children to talk and they provide focused time for children to learn new words. Opportunities such as snack time are used well to encourage conversation and develop independence. Carefully planned interventions help children to make stronger progress in this area.
- Staff in the early years work closely together and their communication about each child is effective. Leaders have established clear systems for communicating with parents, who contribute towards records of their child's achievements. Adults plan topics and activities which build on the interests of the children. Children develop positive, independent learning behaviours. For example, children can find the resources that they need to help them to write a passcode for the door to Goldilocks' house. Pupils make strong progress across the early years so that the proportion of pupils who reach a good level of development is above the national average.
- The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils is regularly monitored. Dips in progress are identified and additional support is tailored to pupils' needs. Well-planned interventions and an emphasis on the well-being of the whole child ensure that pupils' emotional needs are effectively supported. The quality of work observed in pupils' books during the inspection showed that progress for this group of pupils currently in school was strong from their individual starting points.

- The proportion of pupils who attain the expected standard at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics is consistently above the national average. The proportion of pupils at the end of key stage 1 who are working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics is also consistently above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who attain the expected standard in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was above the national average in 2018. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average in 2017 but dipped in 2018. Pupils' progress between the key stages is broadly average.
- Staff use assessment information well to ensure that the most able pupils are challenged sufficiently in class. Changes have been made to establish more opportunities for the most able pupils to work independently and at greater depth in mathematics. The school's internal assessment information and scrutiny of pupil's workbooks show that this group of pupils make stronger progress from their starting points in key stage 1.
- Leaders have brought about improvements in the teaching of reading. They have ensured that pupils are reading with purpose. 'Reading weeks' interest pupils in their topics and provide the opportunities for pupils to raise questions that they are curious about. Pupils' comprehension is regularly assessed and pupils are motivated to read high-quality texts appropriate to their stage of development.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils have more opportunities to use reasoning within mathematics to deepen their thinking
- all pupils apply their knowledge of how to write consistently well across all subjects
- teachers consistently expect pupils to present their written work in a fluent style appropriate to their age.

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

Yours sincerely

Hazel Henson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and other leaders in the school. I spoke with three members of the governing body, including the chair, and a representative from the local authority. I considered views expressed in the staff survey. I met formally with a group of pupils and spoke with others informally during the day. I observed learning, jointly with you, in most classes. I scrutinised with you and senior leaders a selection of pupils' workbooks. I examined a range of the school's documentation, including its self-evaluation document, improvement plan and documents related to safeguarding. I observed behaviour around the school during the day. I considered the views of parents by speaking with them before school. I analysed the 29 responses to Parent View.