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04 September 2017

Mr Karl O'Reilly  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Karl O'Reilly

### **Short inspection of Coppice School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 July 2017 with Zoe Westley, Ofsted Inspector, 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 January 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You took on the role of headteacher in September 2015 following the retirement of the previous headteacher. You provide strong leadership. You have raised the expectations of governors, staff and parents through the innovations and inspiring vision that you have introduced. There is a strong sense of purpose, respect for all and enthusiasm for learning. You and your team have ensured that pupils continue to be well cared for and expectations of behaviour remain high.

You have quickly ensured that leadership teams are extended and distributed throughout the school and have empowered them to be able to complete these roles effectively. Systems to evaluate the quality of teaching have become more rigorous. Since the start of the year, all leaders are now involved in this monitoring. Teaching is having a demonstrably greater impact on pupils' progress as staff make use of a wider range of strategies, research and focused training to respond to the strengths and needs of the pupils. You know your school well and identify accurately where improvements are needed. Since the last inspection you have ensured that staff have greater responsibility for tracking the progress and development of pupils in their classes. Although high numbers of pupils are reaching their targets, this is not sustained over time. You identify correctly that teachers need to respond earlier, with strategies to ensure that pupils who fall behind make rapid progress to catch up. Teacher's assessments are detailed and checks through

moderation are fully established in the early years. You recognise the need to extend this process and deepen moderation across the whole school. Work has begun on this, including within your local partnership of schools. However, a full cycle of moderation of assessments has yet to be completed. Governors are exceptionally well informed about the strengths and areas for development in teaching and learning.

You have maintained strong relationships between staff and parents. Communication between home and school is excellent and timely. This ensures that the staff have a detailed knowledge and understanding of each pupil's specific needs. Parents value the care that staff take in their jobs. In meetings during the inspection, they extolled the benefits this has had on their children's development, behaviour, social skills and learning.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You, your staff and governors give the highest priority to keeping pupils safe. A strong safeguarding culture is established throughout the school. Careful checks are carried out on all staff, governors, contractors and visitors. Staff who carry out the checks are thoroughly versed in the latest requirements and understand the vital importance of this work. Staff and governors are updated regularly and trained well in how to keep pupils safe. They understand the procedures and their own responsibilities. The team of designated safeguarding leaders ensures that referrals to external agencies are well managed and records are detailed and of high quality. Close links with external agencies ensure that pupils and their families receive timely help and support. In meetings with inspectors, parents spoke movingly and in great detail about the myriad ways in which staff had supported them and their children. Parents have great confidence in the school's care, safety and attention to their children's welfare needs.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the visit, we discussed the lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. We agreed to explore the impact of leadership on some important areas of school life, including the areas for improvement since the previous inspection. These included literacy, the achievement of the most able pupils and how pupils are supported and helped to be as independent as possible in their learning and daily lives.
- Literacy is taught well. Teachers have a good knowledge of sounds and letters and enable children to express themselves using a wide range of communication methods.
- Early language, sounds and letters and signs and symbols are modelled well in early years classes. Children are well supported to stay focused on tasks and they respond well to the routines. Children are making good progress from their starting points.
- Consistent expectations that pupils communicate at every opportunity are evident throughout the school. For example, at snack time in key stage 2 classes, pupils

made good responses, choosing snacks and engaging in discussion using pictures, symbols and spoken language.

- Increasing opportunities to write, as well as high expectations, have resulted in swifter progress for most pupils. The number of pupils reaching their targets and exceeding them has increased. The gap between progress in writing, reading and speaking and listening has narrowed steadily in all key stages.
- High expectations of presentation are evident in pupils' books and folders in key stage 3 and 4 classes. Pupils show increasing care in using spelling and punctuation accurately. They organise their writing purposefully by planning it first, and redraft their work to create more-powerful descriptions that engage the reader.
- Improving the achievement of pupils who enter the school with higher prior attainment is a key priority in the school improvement plan. This group of pupils, who are known as the most able pupils, made slower progress in the past due to work not always being adapted well enough for their needs.
- The way the school has chosen to group pupils by ability and communication needs for English and mathematics lessons in key stage 2 onwards has had a demonstrable effect on their progress since September 2016. The most able pupils participate readily in lessons and are making strong progress.
- The most able pupils are increasingly challenged in lessons. This is particularly evident in the secondary and sixth-form groups in the school. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They actively seek a higher level of work from them and consistently demand greater responses in choice of language and in their mathematics work. This is not evident as strongly in primary classes.
- Careful consideration has been given to enabling pupils to become as independent as possible. There is a strong emphasis on making learning interesting, practical and relevant.
- The changes you have introduced are most securely demonstrated in relation to behaviour and especially in pupils' attitudes to learning. Your expectations of pupils' independence and their positive attitudes to learning increase progressively as they move through the school. Rewards in the form of 'brag tags' are highly prized by pupils. Pupils told inspectors, 'It means you are working very hard, sharing things and being good to your friends.'
- Leaders' and governors' ambitions for pupils to continue in their learning, to achieve jobs and to take their rightful place in society are firmly embedded. These ambitions are especially well demonstrated by pupils in key stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form.
- Preparation for fulfilling working life begins early as pupils have options to sign up for the range of daily job opportunities on the 'help wanted' board. Younger secondary-aged pupils are keen to take on responsibilities. They work industriously and with interest as snack assistants, sales assistants in the school tuck shop, light monitors and gardeners.
- Following information and specialist careers guidance sessions, the most able pupils in key stage 4 and 5 are already beginning to think about what they want

to do when they leave school. Their recent writing on this subject showed good knowledge and insight in identifying the qualities they need to learn and develop.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is raised expectation of the most able pupils in the primary classes and consistent planning to support these pupils to become more independent in their learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Gina White

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this short inspection my colleague and I met with you, your deputy headteacher, members of your extended leadership team and all staff. I also met with members of the governing body and spoke with representatives from the local authority in a telephone call. We conducted learning walks with you and your deputy and had the opportunity to speak to pupils and see their work. I also listened to two pupils read. We met with a group of pupils during the day and also met with a group of parents. There were four responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents. School documentation was scrutinised, including school improvement planning, assessment information, the headteacher's report to governors and safeguarding information.