

6 December 2016

Ms Debbie Barnes
Director of Children's Services
County Offices
Newland
Lincoln
LN1 1YQ

Dear Debbie

Improved outcomes in South Holland, Lincolnshire

In the East Midlands region, we want to ensure that all pupils receive a very high standard of education and achieve well. With this in mind, I write to congratulate you and your colleagues in Lincolnshire for working successfully to significantly increase the proportion of pupils attending good or better schools in the South Holland area.

In 2013, senior leaders in your local authority rightly identified that pupil outcomes in primary schools in rural areas of South Holland were too low. Too many pupils left key stage 2 with standards in reading, writing and mathematics that were below Lincolnshire and national averages. Furthermore, with only 54% of pupils in the area attending good or better schools at the time, the standard of teaching and the quality of leadership and management served as significant barriers to raising standards for pupils and generating better outcomes.

Through your officers and others commissioned to work on behalf of the local authority, you implemented a number of strategies to tackle underachievement in South Holland. These strategies included, but were not restricted to:

- the arrangement of structured partnership working between schools, with good and outstanding schools supporting schools judged to be less than good
- reviews of governance and focused training for governors to support their improved oversight of pupils supported by the pupil premium
- more frequent communications with headteachers in the area to gauge the impact of their work and to refine plans
- the introduction of more targeted training to raise the expectations of school subject leaders.

The strategies you implemented have significantly improved the quality of leadership and management and teaching in South Holland. Consequently, almost nine out of

every 10 pupils living in the South Holland area now attend good or better schools. There are also signs of improved outcomes for pupils in South Holland schools. We will continue to monitor pupil outcomes in our meetings together, to check the extent to which the improvements you have made can be sustained and reflected in further improved outcomes for different groups of pupils.

I am aware that an increasing number of schools in Lincolnshire are converting to academies. In light of this, I am also copying this letter to Jennifer Bexon-Smith, Regional Schools Commissioner. Ofsted intends to publish this letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Russell".

Chris Russell HMI
Regional Director, East Midlands