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Mrs Kathryn Bailey  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Bailey

### **Short inspection of Lane Green First School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 January 2016, 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 March 2011.

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

This is a good school because you and the governors provide good leadership. The good academic standards seen at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. Pupils are served well by the overall quality of teaching and level of care provided by your staff. Indeed, the school lives up to its motto of 'Caring and Achieving'.

There are some significant strengths. The early years provision, particularly in the Reception class, is superb. Children get a fantastic start to their education at Lane Green First School. The caring and thoughtful values that staff promote and the school's current procedures for keeping pupils safe are also to be commended.

The vast majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire or who spoke with me during the inspection indicated that they were very happy with the school's work. In particular, parents praised the attention given to the individual needs of pupils and the extra support that school staff put in place if necessary. Pupils who spoke with me were enthusiastic about school life and said that they felt happy and safe in class and on the playground.

Looking to the future, there is still some work to be done to strengthen aspects of teaching in parts of the school, specifically in Years 1 and 2. In these year groups, some teaching does not quite match the quality seen elsewhere. You have plans to develop the leadership roles of other staff in order to help you do this. In addition, you are still developing a new approach to whole-school assessment following the removal of National Curriculum levels.

You, your staff and the governors have a well-informed understanding of the school's current performance. You know where further improvements are needed and have appropriate plans in place to make these happen. You display good judgement. Inspection evidence confirms that you have made wise decisions in order to do the best for the pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding arrangements are excellent. Policies and training are up to date and current practice in the school cannot be faulted. The school's office staff are very well organised and ensure that administrative tasks are carried out efficiently. Checks on newly appointed staff and visitors to school are carried out with great care and attention. Any unexplained pupil absence is followed up with tenacity, and all are aware that pupils' safety and well-being take priority over other matters. Leaders regularly review procedures and practice and learn from any incidents that do occur. Records are up to date and stored properly. The vast majority of parents have confidence in the school's procedures to keep their children safe at school. In conversation with me, pupils reported that bullying and unpleasant or unkind behaviour are rare.

Governors regularly check the school's safety routines and also ask the pupils what they think and respond to what they say. Last term, for example, governors asked pupils about safety on the playground. In response to pupils' concerns about the potential risks posed by people jumping down steps on the playground, a survey was carried out to remind everyone about the rules and to check that everyone followed them.

### **Inspection findings**

- You provide thoughtful and forward-thinking leadership. During this inspection, you presented yourself as open, realistic and evaluative. You keep a close eye on academic standards and also understand the importance of the worthy values that the school promotes and lives by. This is apparent in the way you deal with pupils and in your supportive yet straightforward approach towards staff. You make your expectations clear. You give praise when it is due and guidance when it is necessary. In addition, you do not shy away from difficult decisions when these are needed.

- Pupils of all abilities make good progress across the school. Many start in the Nursery class with a level of knowledge and skill below that typical for their age, particularly in their speech, language and communication. They catch up quickly in the early years classes, and then go on to reach at least average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4, pupils are very well prepared for their move up to middle school.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the early years, particularly in the Reception class, is a significant strength of the school. The provision in this class is remarkable. The classroom provides a rich and colourful learning environment where there is much to see and touch and plenty for the children to do. Children show high levels of confidence and independence and go about their many varied activities with a sense of purpose, engagement and fun. Teaching in this class is inspirational and captivates the children with an almost magical charm. The children get a fantastic start to their school life.
- Because of the excellent start in the early years, pupils develop good learning habits and attitudes to school. This sets them up well for learning in the more senior classes. In the main, pupils in all classes take their work seriously, show respect for others and are attentive to their teachers. They work hard and want to do their best.
- Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is consistently strong. Teaching staff display good subject knowledge and their classrooms are well organised. Work given to pupils builds purposefully and progressively on what they already know. Pupils do very well in both Key Stage 2 classes.
- There has been some recent disruption to teaching arrangements in Key Stage 1. A Year 1 teacher left at Christmas after just one term in post. Alternative teaching arrangements are now in place and are currently working satisfactorily. The quality of teaching in Year 2 is variable. It can be very effective, as is seen in the standard of work in some pupils' books. At times, however, checks on pupils' understanding are not made in a timely fashion. For example, pupils who are not sure about what to do or who have made mistakes are not always noticed soon enough in class. Furthermore, some teaching does not help pupils to understand what they are learning. This means pupils do not get the guidance they need or become confused. This is not common practice but it does hinder progress when it happens.
- Pupils who require additional help with learning or who need a boost in some way get the help and support they need. In a typical week, this might involve advice from visiting specialists, participation in extra one-to-one or small-group teaching sessions, or taking part in additional outdoor learning sessions in order to build confidence and resilience. What characterises all the support provided is that it is tailor-made to each pupil's particular needs and circumstances. Several parents spoken to during this inspection went out of their way to praise this feature of the school's work.

- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils at Lane Green First School has improved over time and in 2015, these pupils did very well indeed. In the most recent end of Key Stage 1 assessments, these pupils were ahead of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school provides a well-organised and worthwhile curriculum. The different subjects and activities on offer serve to broaden pupils' horizons, build their confidence and help them to develop responsible and caring attitudes both in the classroom and beyond. Indeed, outdoor learning is a particular feature of school life. All classes enjoy forest school sessions in the school grounds, and later this year, pupils in Years 3 and 4 will visit a residential activity centre.
- Pupils' attendance, which at the time of the previous inspection was below average, has improved in recent times. The main reason for this is because the persistent absence of a few pupils has reduced. In the current academic year, attendance rates are in line with those seen nationally and there is hardly any unauthorised absence. You and your staff frequently remind parents and pupils about the importance of regular attendance and its link with achievement at school. You keep a watchful eye on this, and if any pupil appears to be missing too much school, you are quick to find out why and to challenge this if there is no good reason.
- You are still developing the school's long-term approach to assessment following the removal of National Curriculum levels. In most classes, day-to-day checks on learning and progress work well and teachers plan lessons that build carefully on pupils' existing knowledge and skills. 'Prove it' moments, whereby teachers notice and record pupils applying a particular piece of knowledge or skill, are used in some classes to capture information about what pupils understand and can do. You and your staff are now looking at ways to make the most of this and other effective practice in order to develop a reliable and manageable whole-school tracking system to record progress as pupils move through the school.
- Together with the governors, you have identified leadership potential in your current staff team. It is clear that there is a capable and promising middle leadership team in place. Developing these middle leaders so that they play a full and active part in checking and strengthening teaching and learning across the school is a key development priority in your current school development plan. I agree that this is an appropriate priority and also note that your partnership work with other local schools will be helpful in supporting them in these roles.
- Through the school website and other means of communication, including text messaging, you provide clear, helpful and regular information for parents.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the quality of some Key Stage 1 teaching improves so that pupils get timely and appropriate guidance and explanations
- the role of middle leaders in checking the quality of teaching and learning across the school is developed further
- they continue to work towards implementing a reliable and manageable whole-school assessment system following the removal of National Curriculum levels.

Yours sincerely

Martin Pye  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, school staff, four governors and a local authority adviser. I carried out short observations of teaching and learning in all year groups and looked at pupils' work. In addition, I talked with pupils in lessons and in the dining hall and spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.

By the end of the inspection, there were 41 recent responses on Parent View. I took account of these and noted the school's routines for communicating with parents and gathering their views. I looked at a number of documents, including pupils' progress information, the school's own evaluation of its performance, and several school policy documents. I also checked the school's website and the procedures for keeping pupils safe. I talked with several members of staff about safeguarding matters.