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Shaun Miles
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Dear Mr Miles

Short inspection of St Luke's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school with Kerry Rochester, Ofsted Inspector, on 9 November 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 September 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have set a clear vision of high expectations and continual improvement. Your vision is shared by all of the staff. You all work together as a strong, united team. You take pride in the school and want the very best for every child. As a result, pupils are happy, confident and are proud of their school. Many parents told inspectors that they highly value the hard-working staff. Comments included, 'The teachers are passionate and want the best for every single child.'

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the way that they monitor the quality of teaching and check pupils' progress. Since joining the school, you have reorganised the senior leadership team. The new and redefined leadership roles provide effective ways for leaders to frequently check the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Leaders work closely with teachers to agree the actions that need to be taken in order to further improve the quality of their teaching. However, the actions set for teachers do not identify precisely what teachers need to do to help raise pupils' achievement further.

You have put an accurate assessment system in place in response to the new national curriculum. The system is well understood by staff. Leaders and staff keep a close eye on the progress of pupils at an individual level. You continue to improve the way that you use assessment information. This is to ensure that pupils'

progress, from different starting points, is secure and suitably ambitious to meet the new and raised standards, especially at the end of Year 2.

Your continued focus on improving the quality of teaching has addressed the issues raised at the previous inspection. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning are a testimony to your success. Teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. Pupils have time to complete their work and are eager to discuss their learning. For example, during this inspection pupils in Year 5 were exploring irreversible changes in materials during science. They used scientific language confidently as they designed and conducted fair tests using a mixture of vinegar and bicarbonate of soda. Pupils told inspectors, 'We plan interesting experiments like this almost every week and we learn a lot. We have to think really hard about what happens and why.'

Safeguarding is effective.

The following comment was typical of the pupils' responses when asked about safety in school: 'There is nowhere in the school or in the playground or on the fields that I don't feel safe. We learn about things like stranger danger so that we know how to keep safe outside school.' Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are well cared for and feel safe in school.

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and detailed records are kept. Staff receive regular and appropriate training in safeguarding. You have recently updated the school's safeguarding policy to ensure that it includes the latest guidance. Further meetings are planned to ensure that all staff understand what the most recent changes mean in practice. All staff, including lunchtime supervisors, know what to do and who to go to if they have any concerns at all.

Governors and staff have received training on the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. They say that this has raised awareness and understanding of these aspects. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding is well informed and vigilant in her role. She works with you and staff to ensure that everyone is responsible for pupils' safety. She visits the school frequently and talks to pupils and staff to judge the impact of safeguarding practices on school life.

Inspection findings

- Since joining the school, you have raised expectations. With the support of governors, you have introduced robust systems for managing the performance of teaching staff. You have had to make some difficult decisions to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning continues to improve. You have not shied away from this and have managed staff changes sensitively and effectively.
- Those pupils who left Reception having exceeded a good level of development did not all go on to attain standards at a greater depth in reading and writing in 2016. You have identified the need to use assessment information more effectively to ensure that pupils are given suitably challenging tasks and opportunities, over time, to achieve standards at

greater depth.

- In 2016, a high proportion of the most able pupils reached greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. This is a result of particularly strong teaching in Years 5 and 6.
- You have organised effective training to improve the teaching of writing. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils are being helped to write effectively and at length, in a variety of styles and for different purposes. Pupils enjoy using grammatical language correctly to discuss and identify how to improve their writing.
- You have taken effective actions to improve the teaching of phonics. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check remained higher than the national average in 2016. Pupils are using their phonic skills well to support their spelling in writing.
- New reading resources have been purchased to support teachers and provide appropriate reading books for pupils. As a result, pupils have opportunities to regularly practise their phonics skills when they are reading. This is having a positive impact on pupils' confidence and enjoyment of reading.
- Less able readers are improving their confidence at tackling unfamiliar words. Reading books match their skill levels well. They regularly hear teachers and other adults read aloud. Older children in the school are partnered with them as reading buddies. These activities are developing positive attitudes and a love of reading.
- Most-able readers read fluently and with expression. They show a good understanding of their reading and are able to select evidence from texts to support their views.
- Governors are highly skilled and ambitious for the school. They have reorganised the way they work to ensure that their skills and expertise are used most effectively. Link governors work with specific members of staff to check key aspects of the school's performance. This has increased the level of challenge and support for the school. Nevertheless, governors do not receive enough information about the effect that different interventions have on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school. As a result, they are not able to check the impact of this additional funding or provide the same degree of support and challenge for leaders about this aspect of the school's work.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years remains above the national average. Children enter Year 1 with particular strengths in self-confidence and awareness as well as in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy the many opportunities to listen to and work with popular children's authors. During the inspection, some pupils were developing their confidence, enjoyment and mastery of language by working with a visiting, professional children's poet. These activities inspire the love of learning that is very much alive in St Luke's.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers are given precise actions to help them to know how to further raise pupils' achievement
- assessment information is used effectively to ensure that groups of pupils, from different starting points, are given suitably challenging tasks over time to achieve standards at greater depth
- governors carefully check the impact of additional funding on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils so that they can support and challenge leaders about this aspect of the school's work.

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

Yours sincerely

Marilyn Mottram
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders, including leaders with responsibility for English, mathematics and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. I also met with the vice-chair of the governing body and four other governors. You joined me on brief visits to classes. We looked at examples of pupils' work and we talked to pupils about their learning. I spoke informally with pupils at different points during the school day. I listened to pupils, of all abilities, read from Year 1 and Year 2. I reviewed a range of documentation including the school's own self-evaluation of its performance and documents related to keeping pupils safe and we discussed the most recent information about pupils' achievement.

This inspection focused particularly on pupils' progress and achievement in writing; the teaching of reading in key stage 1; how you have addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection; and safeguarding. Responses from 56 staff questionnaires and 52 parents via Ofsted's online questionnaires were taken into account.