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5 April 2019

Mrs Alison Grennan  
Headteacher  
St Luke's Church of England Aided Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Grennan

### **Short inspection of St Luke's Church of England Aided Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 March 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 November 2014.

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

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

Along with your staff team, you have created a caring and inclusive school where pupils are happy and confident and value their education. A sense of community and nurture of the child and their family fills the school. Typical comments from parents include: 'They all go the extra mile for the children and I am thrilled that my child is part of all this' and 'The headteacher sees every child as her own.' Staff are proud to be part of the school community. All members of staff who completed the staff survey agreed that the school has a culture that encourages calm and orderly conduct and is aspirational for all pupils.

The supportive attitudes of staff and the exemplary behaviour of pupils are significant strengths of the school. Your attention to knowing and nurturing each individual child and leaders' dedication to providing a wide range of visits and experiences for pupils reflect the ethos of the school.

In the early years, staff support children to settle quickly and develop positive attitudes to learning. There is a strong focus on communication and language in the Nursery and Reception classes which supports the progress of all children, including children who speak English as an additional language. Children develop an ability to understand and follow instructions and to hold a simple conversation with their peers or an adult. Increasing the breadth of children's vocabulary is an area for

further development. Children move on successfully into Year 1.

Effective teaching in key stages 1 and 2 builds upon the strengths of the early years. The excellent relationships that exist between pupils and adults ensure that positive attitudes continue to be developed, and these are clearly evident throughout the school. Pupils are proud of their school and are keen to talk about their learning. They say that their teachers expect them to work hard. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the value of the 'chilli challenges' in deepening their learning to a greater depth. Pupils are rarely absent.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Your understanding of the diversity of faiths, cultures and religions of pupils who attend your school is deep and respectful. Leaders ensure that the Christian faith remains central to the school's ethos, while valuing and respecting pupils' own beliefs. Parents value this. For example, parents said: 'The school celebrates differences and supports all and not just academically' and 'The Christian ethos was very important to us as a family and we like how this is promoted through assemblies.' Leaders recognise the challenges pupils face, and they work to raise aspirations and prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils say: 'We are diverse and unique, and we respect that.' The pupils I spoke to were testament to how successful you are in achieving this ambition. They actively demonstrate the school motto of 'Aspire, Believe, Achieve.' They undoubtedly enjoy the visits and residentials that are an integral part of school life and recount their experiences with fluency and enthusiasm.

Governors are aware of their responsibilities and challenge senior leadership effectively. They undertake training to support them in carrying out their roles. Governors complete termly learning walks, which they find are useful opportunities to see how the school is improving. A recent development involves subject leaders presenting an aspect of their subject to the governing body. The aim is to strengthen governors' knowledge and understanding of each subject area so that the effectiveness of monitoring is increased.

Senior leaders have responded well to the recommendations from the previous inspection report. You have implemented strategies to check pupils' progress regularly and pupils take part in lessons with enthusiasm. You have provided staff training on new teaching strategies to engage and challenge pupils, being mindful of the needs of both those who speak English as an additional language as well as pupils whose first language is English. However, more work needs to be done to deepen pupils' use and knowledge of the vocabulary they need in all the subjects that they study.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You ensure that safeguarding is given a high priority at St Luke's. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities ensure that everyone understands their part in keeping pupils safe. Your knowledge of the risks and dangers that pupils face within the context of your school is clear. You take decisive steps to access targeted training at the relevant level for all designated safeguarding leads. Consequently, safeguarding

leaders have a range of skills, knowledge and expertise that meet national, local and school priorities.

Safeguarding training for all staff and governors is regularly updated and appropriate to their roles. Training has ensured that referrals are timely and early intervention is initiated should any concerns arise. Leaders work closely with external agencies, when necessary, to ensure that pupils are protected and families are supported. You escalate matters when you feel that external agencies are not taking your concerns seriously enough.

Pupils have complete confidence in the adults in the school. Pupils said they have 'absolute trust in adults to look after you'. Pupils demonstrate a deep understanding of safety in a range of situations, including first aid and an awareness of gang cultures. They discussed aspects of their learning around keeping safe with great maturity and recognised: 'It's real, we are grown up and we need to know this.' Digital ambassadors support e-safety work in the school and playleaders help with behaviour and exercise at breaktimes. Pupils chosen for these roles take them seriously and understand the expectations on them to help keep pupils in the school safe and healthy.

## **Inspection findings**

- You have established an emphasis on communication and language in English and mathematics throughout the school. You, alongside senior leaders, reflect on the needs of individuals and different groups of pupils. You have made choices about the quality of texts used in English and the approach taken to teach mathematics. The middle leaders responsible for English and mathematics make relevant checks on how well the curriculum and teaching in their subject support pupils' progress. They understand what is needed to improve outcomes in their subjects further. Professional development has increased all teachers' awareness of what greater depth learning looks like in reading, writing and mathematics. Evidence in pupils' books demonstrates this. Some middle- and high-attaining pupils are beginning to demonstrate the skills needed to achieve the higher standards expected for their age. However, the improvements are relatively new and more needs to be done to continue this trend.
- Leaders' actions support teachers to make professional decisions on the content of and approach to delivering lessons. You also provide clear guidelines on what should form part of all lessons. For example, all lessons include a focus on vocabulary. Staff, responding to Ofsted's staff questionnaire, say leaders trust teachers to plan effective lessons for the pupils that they teach as they know them best.
- You know the backdrop to your school well and demonstrate the ability to reflect on and respond to changes in the context. For example, you recognised that the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has increased in the early years and in key stage 1. As a result, leaders reviewed the teaching of phonics and this led to changes in the way phonics and English are taught. Leaders' monitoring shows that pupils' application of phonics skills to support their fluency in reading has improved. This is the case for pupils who speak

English as an additional language as well as those whose first language is English.

- The environment in the early years is stimulating and well-resourced. Children work well in both their family groups and focused adult-led groups. They have opportunities to work separately as a Nursery class and two Reception classes as well as times to mix together as an early years foundation stage unit. In response to the changing demographics of the cohorts entering the school, leaders have increased the number of adults working in the early years. Leaders and staff have a clearly defined rationale behind every decision and use the daily routine to promote both communication and mathematics. For example, a child told me clearly that there were 30 children in the class today and none were away. The topics studied broaden children's experiences and language acquisition. However, children need further opportunities to expand their use and knowledge of vocabulary for communicating, both verbally and in writing. Leaders demonstrate capacity to continue to drive improvements to ensure that children meet their full potential.
- Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is pitched just right for most pupils' learning needs. Not only that, but teaching staff manage pupils' behaviour in a very positive and upbeat way. Consequently, pupils grow in confidence. They are not afraid to make mistakes and develop into self-assured and independent learners who are keen to share their opinions and ideas. Furthermore, aspects such as 'chilli challenges', three tasks provided at different levels for pupils to access independently, help to lift expectations and generate a pride in achievements. There is a need for teachers to continue to develop pupils' vocabulary, particularly that related to specific subjects.
- You and your leadership team reflect deeply and widely upon practice and outcomes and this has led to you identifying some straightforward changes that are beginning to show impact. For example, by providing time for teachers to look at the previous writing and mathematics books for pupils prior to them entering a new year group this has helped teachers to know the starting points for these pupils. Consequently, work in pupils' books shows strong progress over time and an increased number of pupils are working closer to, or above, age-related expectations.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- vocabulary acquisition is consolidated and deepened to allow all pupils, including children in the early years, to understand, reason and communicate effectively across a wide range of subjects
- effective teaching strategies recently introduced in English and mathematics are built on to ensure that all pupils, including the most able, continue to make strong progress.

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 Wolverhampton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Foulkes  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, members of your leadership team and the English and mathematics leaders. I also met with five members of the governing body and an external adviser who supports your school. I visited early years with the deputy headteacher and together we visited Years 1 to 6 to observe teaching and learning. I looked at samples of pupils' work jointly with the English and mathematics leaders. I talked with pupils in lessons and also spoke with a group of pupils from Years 3 to 6 about various aspects of school life. I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school.

I reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the single central record, the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plan, several school policy documents and procedures for keeping pupils safe. I also checked the school's website. I spoke with some parents at the beginning of the school day. By the end of the inspection, there were 37 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 26 free-text responses. I took account of these responses and I also considered the 14 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.