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Rebecca Abrahams
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Dear Ms Abrahams

Short inspection of St Luke's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 September 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 June 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

You were appointed as headteacher in April 2015. Prior to this, the school had been without a substantive headteacher for some time. Since your arrival, you have revitalised the school by setting out a clear vision and identifying key values which are rooted firmly in the school's faith ethos. You have been relentless in your drive to make improvements in the school and courageous in tackling weak practice.

The revised national curriculum was not introduced in 2014 as required and, as a result, pupils fell behind others of their age. You have corrected this situation. Furthermore, you have created a new leadership structure and appointed new leaders and teachers. Together, you are implementing effective and positive change. As a result, the dip in standards that occurred prior to your arrival is being addressed and currently pupils are making good progress. They are catching up with their peers nationally. Where they still have ground to make up, you have clear plans in place to speed up their progress further.

The previous inspection report recommended that leaders improve the quality of teaching by increasing the level of challenge for pupils, especially for the most able. It also recommended that the quality of pupils' writing

should be improved. Since your appointment, you have set up systems which allow you to measure the progress that different groups of pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers have carried out observations in lessons, focused on checking that the most able and the least able pupils are provided with challenging activities which promote good progress. You have implemented a revised marking and feedback policy which is consistently applied by teachers. The areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection are being addressed.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Since your appointment, you have tightened up site security and reviewed the school's policy documentation in line with the most recent guidance. You have made sure that absence is followed up rigorously, and any concerns reported to the relevant agencies. Leaders, governors and members of staff are regularly trained in aspects of safeguarding. Skilled and experienced professionals deliver training on a range of relevant topics. You and another senior leader have taken on responsibility as designated safeguarding leads. You have communicated this very effectively to staff. Members of staff know exactly how to respond and report any concerns. You keep detailed records of any issues that arise.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe with online safety having a high priority. Posters in classrooms remind pupils of simple rules to follow to maintain their security when online. Governors take safeguarding seriously; they commissioned an external audit of the school's practice and procedures to make sure that any possible further improvements were identified. You are now implementing the audit's few minor suggestions.

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- Leadership and management of the school have been re-energised since you arrived at the school four terms ago. You have worked with governors, staff, parents and pupils to tackle weaknesses and set the school back on track. Governors describe a considerable 'gear change'; parents recognise the impact of your leadership; and pupils are making more progress. You are determined that the school will continue on this upward trajectory.
- Leaders correctly identified that pupils were not making enough progress in reading. They introduced new strategies for the teaching of reading throughout the school. In May 2016 you appointed a new literacy leader, who is making sure that these new strategies are implemented successfully and consistently. Teachers and teaching assistants are well-trained to deliver these lessons. In Year 1, we saw small groups of pupils

of all abilities reading confidently. The least able were reading repetitive texts with great enjoyment. The most able pupils were tackling more complex texts with several sentences on each page. They rose admirably to the additional challenge of identifying when and why full stops were used within the text. Similarly, in Year 4 the most able pupils were reading 'The BFG' by Roald Dahl fluently and with expression. In 2016, progress in reading was good for most groups of pupils in most year groups, showing that they are catching up with their peers nationally.

- The majority of leaders are new to leadership or new to their role. They are enthusiastic and keen to contribute to improvements. However, they need training and support to be fully effective in fulfilling their ambitions. Similarly, some governors are new to their role. They have attended training and now understand more of the information that is presented to them. They receive information from a range of sources to help them check on the school's progress. However, they do not ask precisely focused questions to hold leaders fully to account for their work.
- You have introduced a system for recording the progress and attainment of pupils in different cohorts and different groups. You have a deep understanding of this information, and the factors which influence results. This information confirms that in almost all year groups, boys are making similar progress in writing to girls, for example. Overall, there is no trend of underperformance for disadvantaged pupils. You have correctly identified that pupils from lower starting points do not make consistently strong progress and have put detailed plans in place to tackle this issue in the coming academic year.
- In two year groups, attainment is weaker as a result of the late implementation of the national curriculum and historic poor teaching. You have focused resources on improving standards in these cohorts and have comprehensive plans in place to ensure that these pupils catch up with their peers before they move on to secondary school. The proportion of pupils working above age-related expectations is increasing over time in other year groups.
- The proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has increased year on year. In 2016, this proportion was above the national average for 2015 – the most recent comparative national information available. Disadvantaged pupils in this cohort still lag behind others, but the difference is gradually diminishing over time. A significant number of children join the early years with skills which are below those typical for their age, and they make good progress. Indoors, provision is bright and attractive with interesting activities. We saw pupils enjoying activities for prolonged periods of time during our visit to the Reception classes. Outdoors, however, activities were not as inviting. They were not consistently enriched with text, letters and numbers as those inside were.
- You have tackled the poor attendance of some pupils with determination. You have nominated a member of staff to take leadership of this aspect of the school's work and provide support yourself when needed. You have introduced incentives to reward pupils' good attendance, and follow

up any absences rigorously. Attendance is starting to improve but remains just below average, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum, which includes art, science, music and swimming. They learn about different faiths within the religious ethos of the school. Parents appreciate the provision of enrichment opportunities such as sport, instrumental tuition, dance and art.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they secure further improvements in outcomes throughout the school and, especially, in the progress of the least able pupils, by:
  - ensuring that governors are more able to ask pertinent questions that are sharply focused on key areas of the school's performance
  - training new and inexperienced leaders to drive forward improvements at a fast rate
  - successfully implementing the plans currently in place and checking on the impact of these actions.

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

Yours sincerely

Gaynor Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector focused on the following areas during the inspection: pupils' progress in reading, particularly disadvantaged pupils; boys' progress in writing; whether the most able are suitably challenged, particularly the most able disadvantaged pupils; pupils' attendance; the achievement of children in the early years; and the school's safeguarding procedures.
In order to test these out, the inspector undertook observations in lessons, heard pupils read, and looked at pupils' books. All observations in lessons were carried out alongside yourself or the leader responsible for literacy. Meetings were held with senior leaders, governors and members of staff. A meeting was held with representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of London. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised including information about outcomes for groups of pupils, policy documentation and information about attendance and safeguarding.