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Mrs Barbara Dunn
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dunn

Short inspection of St Luke's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 December 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Both you and your deputy are a positive force to be reckoned with. Your combined drive and determination are tangible, because you are so clearly focused on removing any potential barriers to pupils' learning. You make sure that pupils' welfare is given the highest priority in order to keep pupils safe and secure. As a consequence, pupils are confident, mature and respectful learners.

All leaders, staff and governors share your high aspirations. As a result, most of the recommendations identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed. This is particularly so in mathematics. In 2016, pupils achieved well above pupils nationally in key stage 2, including the most able pupils and the most able disadvantaged. You explained that you made an early start on developing a new curriculum which is topic-based. This secures good cross-curricular work for pupils to develop key skills. For example, there are greater opportunities for pupils to work in depth in mathematics in other subjects. Your focus on developing pupils' research skills is evident. Pupils enthusiastically undertake research projects which have improved their ability to find things out for themselves.

You explained that your work is now to secure exceptional achievement in reading and writing especially for high achievers. A resounding success has been the review of phonics teaching, resulting in 100% of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check in 2016. Nevertheless, although rates of progress are speeding up in literacy, particularly in key stage 2, many initiatives have yet to be

fully effective and securely embedded in key stage 2 or replicated in key stage 1. As a result, some groups of pupils' progress, particularly the most able, including disadvantaged most-able pupils, is slower than for other groups. Although the proportion of children achieving a good level of development improved and was closer to the national average in 2016, boys consistently underachieve in the Reception class.

Safeguarding is effective.

All safeguarding arrangements are robust and fit for purpose. The chair of the governing body, who is also the safeguarding governor, rigorously monitors every aspect of safeguarding procedures and policies. All the required checks are carried out diligently to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Training for the designated safeguarding lead, governors and staff is up to date. These include national priorities, such as the 'Prevent' duty, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation. Records are detailed and any concerns are followed up swiftly with the appropriate agencies. As a result, staff are well prepared to recognise any signs of potential abuse. They know exactly what they need to do if anyone raises concerns. The vigilance of staff, the effectiveness of the pastoral system, including art therapy and the strong partnerships with external agencies, mean that pupils are kept very safe.

Inspection findings

- You and your deputy monitor the performance of the school well. You make sure that assessments are accurate through cross-checks in school and with other schools. The local authority has also moderated assessments. You assess and track pupils' progress meticulously. Checks on pupils' progress and regular meetings with all staff who work with specific pupils enable you to identify those pupils who are at risk of underachieving. Thus, you and other leaders are able to prioritise the right areas for improvement. Consequently, when I outlined the key lines of enquiry at the start of the inspection, there were no surprises for you or your deputy.
- The first line of enquiry focused on why the same pupils in 2016 achieved exceptionally well in mathematics in key stage 2 but less well in reading and to a lesser extent in writing. The specific focus was the achievement of the most able pupils, including disadvantaged most-able pupils and boys.
- You invest wisely in professional development and training for staff, and especially so for the three new teachers who started in September 2016. Teachers work together to model high-quality teaching and embed effective practice. The assistant headteacher is an excellent role model for other teachers. Staff have also visited other schools to share best practice, including challenging the most able pupils effectively.
- Following on from your observations, you have implemented a range of focused and whole-school strategies to accelerate progress in reading and writing, but chiefly in key stage 2. For example, you have trialled an independent project in Year 6. Pupils read specific texts at home and deepen their comprehension skills in lessons. Likewise, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils use their higher-order thinking

skills, such as inference and deduction, to read from a recommended list of books specifically designed to make pupils work hard. Although you intend to roll out some of these initiatives across the school, there is no time to waste in order to boost progress of pupils in other year groups, and especially so in key stage 1.

- The second line of enquiry focused on achievement across key stage 1, especially the progress most-able pupils make, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. In 2016, attainment in Year 2 was average in mathematics, but below in English, especially in reading.
- The systematic teaching of phonics, including ample opportunities for pupils to use and apply their phonic knowledge in their reading and writing, is beginning to have a positive impact on achievement. A review of reading provision has meant that reading is now taught regularly in small guided groups. There is better support for those pupils who do not read at home regularly. Reading volunteers support them in school. The library and class book corners all promote the importance and pleasure of reading. Pupils who read to me clearly enjoy reading. Both the less able and the most able did so accurately, with expression and confidence.
- Teachers and support staff implement a range of strategies to speed up progress for all ability groups, including the most able pupils. This includes targeted teaching in reading, writing and mathematics. However, first-hand observations confirm that activities do not always make pupils think hard about their learning. The most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to work on harder activities. This is because either the group activity is too easy, or pupils sometimes choose a task which does not stretch their learning.
- Although you set whole class and individual targets, you do not take account of the starting points of different ability groups. The groups who are lagging behind the national figures are not making accelerated progress, which would diminish differences more quickly. This is particularly so for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils in reading and writing across the school, and boys in the Reception class.
- We discussed the potential lack of challenge in writing, as all pupils have the same steps to work through to achieve the learning outcome. This does not take into account pupils' prior learning. As a consequence, the most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to achieve as well as they can.
- Never complacent, you and other leaders have begun to implement a further strategy to improve pupils' writing skills. This includes a clear progression of skills for pupils to achieve. However, as with the other initiatives, it is vital that teachers take into account pupils' starting points in order to stretch all pupils in their learning, especially the most able.
- The third key line of enquiry focused on how well children learn and make progress in the Reception class. Observations confirm that the most able children are not always given activities which build on what they already know and can do. As a result, they quickly complete work that is too easy. This slows their learning down.
- You explained how the outdoor area has been improved recently, and my own observations confirm that it supports children well in all areas of their learning. New resources are organised to maximise children's progress and enjoyment, including their early literacy skills. However, the classroom does not promote

these same skills as well. Children do not have situations, such as role play to encourage them to read and write for a purpose, in a real-life context.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they set challenging and measurable targets based on different pupils' starting points to diminish any differences quickly, particularly for the most able pupils and boys in the Reception class
- the successful improvement strategies to boost progress that have been piloted in key stage 2 in reading and writing are rolled out across the school swiftly to speed up progress in reading and writing
- activities make the most able pupils and children think hard about their learning
- they provide a relevant and stimulating context for children to read and write for a purpose, on their own, in the Reception class.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the diocese of London, and the director of children's services for Westminster. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I visited most classes in the school, jointly with you and your deputy headteacher. I looked at pupils' work and informally talked to pupils about their work. I met with a small group of pupils who shared their views about the school and how safe they feel. I held meetings with senior and middle leaders and governors, including the chair. I held a telephone discussion with the local authority representative. Several pupils read to me, including the most able and least able pupils. I also evaluated documents, including school development plans, evaluations, safeguarding information, pupils' achievement and minutes of meetings.

As outlined above, the inspector agreed to prioritise the following areas with the school at the start of the inspection:

- how well the most able pupils are challenged in their reading and writing in key stage 2, including the most able disadvantaged pupils
- how well the most able pupils are challenged in their reading and writing in key stage 1, including the most able disadvantaged pupils
- how well children learn and make progress in the Reception class, particularly the most able children and boys.