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Mrs Sue Thomas  
Headteacher  
Lady Katherine Leveson Church of England Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Thomas

### **Short inspection of Lady Katherine Leveson Church of England Primary 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 September 2010.

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

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

The culture of the school values pupils' work and contributions. You are very clear in your commitment to the school's values when stating that, 'In this school we always put the children first'. You have made sure that staff treat every pupil as an individual. In addition, you, your staff and governors place at the front and centre of your endeavours the school's strong commitment to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development alongside their academic and personal development.

Together with your skilful and committed governing body you have made sure that the staff team is committed to continuous improvement. Staff changes and intelligent recruitment of key staff have strengthened the teaching and the quality of support provided for pupils. As a result, pupils' achievement continues to improve in reading, writing and mathematics. You have skilfully made sure that the school provides nothing less than good teaching. You and your staff plan an innovative, creative and varied curriculum that interests and enlivens pupils and their learning.

This is a significant improvement as the teaching and curriculum, although good at the time, were areas that required some improvement the last time the school was inspected, in 2010. The school development plan sets out the right priorities for improvement, although it is not always clear in the plan who is monitoring, checking or evaluating each action aimed at improving teaching or pupils' achievement still further.

Leaders, governors and staff are an integral part of the local community and have forged strong and positive relationships with families. This accounts for the large amount of parental satisfaction expressed, either online through the Ofsted site, Parent View, or the results of school surveys and directly to Her Majesty's Inspector during the inspection. Many parents pay tribute to the efforts of the staff team and governors in making this, as one parent rightly stated, 'A lovely school'.

There have been significant improvements to the early years. There is now expanded provision managed by the governing body for two-year-old children in the Lady K Care and Play. This wraparound provision is of the highest quality and has built upon the good provision it provided the last time it was inspected by Ofsted in 2014.

Your leadership and that of your governors are strong and effective. You make sure that the teaching is monitored regularly and systematically. Governors are involved and very knowledgeable and receive regular updates and accurate reports on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupil outcomes. Assessment information is accessible to staff and governors and provides accurate details of the progress that pupils make and what they are expected to achieve at each stage of the school year. There is still room for improvement in the consistency, form and structure of pupils' independent writing in Key Stage 2 and the achievement of the most-able pupils in mathematics. Your staff and leaders have recognised this through accurate evaluations of pupils' work and progress.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team and governors have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and robust. Safeguarding procedures are followed through systematically and staff vetting procedures are rigorous and up to date. There are robust systems in place to keep pupils safe. Teaching, support and administrative staff are well trained and vigilant. Administrative staff diligently check and verify the identity of visitors, including inspectors, when they arrive at school. Both governors and staff keep up to date with legal requirements and undertake regular reviews of the school's procedures. The safety and well-being of two-year-old children in the Lady K Care and Play is expertly managed by very well qualified and highly competent early years practitioners.

Pupils and the parents spoken to by Her Majesty's Inspector were unanimous in their belief that pupils are safe in school. Pupils say that the staff and other pupils make them feel very safe, valued and secure in school.

## Inspection findings

- The leadership and culture of the school create a very positive, supportive and cohesive school community. Staff and governors are ambitious, aspirational and attentive, so that, as one governor rightly stated, 'This school values and wants the best for each child'. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school and learning have improved significantly since the school's last inspection. Pupils are courteous, mature and very proud of their school and community. The pastoral support and welfare provided for pupils is of high quality. Strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the work of the school. Relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils are strong and pupils say that it is very easy to make and keep friends.
- Pupils achieve well because the school sets high expectations. Achievement gaps have closed between significant groups, such as those that previously existed between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school and nationally. The teaching remains good across the school. In addition, the school is striving to build on some highly effective classroom practice. Teachers and support staff are successful in encouraging pupils to learn well and try hard. Pupils thrive in this very positive climate for learning. Combined with a creative and stimulating curriculum, the teaching and support provided for all pupils improve their academic and personal development. Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs, particularly those with Education and Health Care Plans and statements of special educational needs, achieve very well and thrive in this school. Parents confirmed that the attention and care that these pupils receive is of enormous benefit to the pupils and their families.
- The quality of teaching continues to improve, building on the recommendations set out at the time of the last inspection. Teachers and support staff now make sure that lessons and the activities planned for pupils offer the right level of challenge. The teaching of reading throughout the school is a real strength. The foundations for pupils' consistently good achievement in reading are set in the early years and Key Stage 1, where the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) is highly effective. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 are energised and enthused by an innovative reading programme called 'Genre Quest' devised by a member of staff. This 'quest' enables pupils to undertake some challenges by completing a number of reading and research tasks involving a range of books, authors and genres. Their 'quest' achievements are celebrated each week during the school's award and celebration assemblies. Pupils spoke enthusiastically to Her Majesty's Inspector about this project and it was clear that this, like many other innovative and creative activities, trips and projects planned for them, is having a very positive impact on pupils' achievement in literacy. As a result, most of the older pupils in Key Stage 2 are avid readers and are

knowledgeable about authors of children's literature.

- Writing standards are improving and pupils are given many opportunities to write at length independently. Teachers mark pupils' work consistently well and offer pupils the right guidance and support to improve their writing. Writing standards are improving very well in the early years and Key Stage 1 as an increasing proportion of pupils reach a good level of development by the end of Reception and pupils reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. Nonetheless, there is still room for improvement as the form and structure of pupils' handwriting is inconsistent across classes in Key Stage 2. Some pupils make repeated and unnecessary spelling errors of words that are familiar to them.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics across the school but there is room for improvement in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average and pupils are increasingly making good rates of progress. Pupils in Key Stage 2 build on the strong foundations laid in the early years and Key Stage 1 as they apply their knowledge of number facts to calculate and solve problems. The most-able pupils, particularly in Years 3 to 6, are increasingly applying their numeracy skills to a range of interesting problems, although they tend to rely too heavily on prompts from teachers and support staff. This affects the most-able pupils particularly as assessment information shows that more pupils have the potential to make more progress and reach very high standards in mathematics. Teachers do not always provide opportunities for pupils to solve more complex problems or number puzzles so that pupils can think logically and systematically; rather, pupils rely too heavily on trial and error, or direct guidance and intervention from adults to solve a problem.
- Early years provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is of consistently good quality and has improved well since the last inspection. There is now strong provision for two-year-olds in the Lady K Care and Play, which enhances and extends the all-round welfare, care and education that the school provides for two- to five-year-old children. All early years settings, both indoors and outdoors, are stimulating for the children. There are strong transition arrangements for families when children start school and when they move from early years into Year 1. Transition and family links are very well managed by the school's parent support worker.
- You and governors have ensured that there are clear roles and responsibilities assigned to all staff to manage and oversee key stages and subjects. This clarity of roles has resulted in accurate oversight and evaluations of achievement and teaching in each phase of the school. Through systematic monitoring of teaching and learning, you and governors have selected the right priorities for improvement in the school development plan. The range of monitoring is extensive and includes book trawls, lesson visits and accurate reports to governors to ensure consistent improvement.

Governors have assigned themselves specific links with each year group and subject of the National Curriculum so that they can keep up to date with new developments and are well informed when receiving reports about achievement and teaching from school leaders.

- Leaders, governors and staff have maintained an effective and creative curriculum since the last inspection. Pupils are offered wide-ranging and extensive opportunities to experience and excel in music and the creative and performing arts, as well as in sport and outdoor pursuits. Pupils learn about the diversity of cultures and customs that exist in modern Britain today. They are taught British values of tolerance and respect for all faiths, customs and religions. The very close links with neighbouring St Mary's Church enhances still further the school's core values and Christian character as a voluntary aided Church of England primary school. There are strong links with another partner primary school, offering pupils opportunities to share experiences of different customs and cultures.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a continued focus on raising standards in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 by checking and improving the quality of pupils' handwriting and spelling more robustly; and include more problem-solving tasks for the most-able pupils in mathematics lessons that enable them to apply logical thinking rather than learning just through trial and error
- the school development plan sets out who is monitoring or evaluating each of the school's priorities and actions so that leaders and governors can hold staff to account and gauge the impact of actions taken to secure sustained improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Birmingham, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

In addition to meeting with you, your senior staff and five governors, including the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, you and I visited all classrooms and early years settings. I spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day to seek their views about the school. I spoke to a number of pupils during lessons and looked at their work in books. I also met a group of pupils from Key Stage 2 to discuss their work, progress and views. I also considered the views of 50 parents and carers recorded on Parent View, the online Ofsted questionnaire. I looked at assessment information and the targets set for this year's cohorts of pupils in each year group. I scrutinised and discussed the school's self-evaluation and development plan, and checked staff vetting and safeguarding documents and procedures to determine whether the school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective.