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8 February 2016

Mrs Kimberley Farrall
Headteacher
St Luke's Church of England Primary School
Queen's Park Road
Heywood
Lancashire
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Dear Mrs Farrall

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

Following my visit to the school on 26 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 October 2010.

This school continues to be good.

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

You are an inspirational headteacher. You have been in post for just over one year and have already won the trust and support of staff, parents and pupils. Pupils say that they are happy to come to your school and parents appreciate all the support provided by you and your dynamic leadership team.

Leaders and governors share your ethos of togetherness: your school is a community where all pupils are included and thrive. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is taught well and emphasised through your promotion of Christian values. You have established a before- and after-school club and you are now setting up a Parents and Teachers Association (PTA). Home-school communication was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection; now it is a clear strength. You listen regularly to pupils' views through your school council.

Children enter the early years with abilities below those typical for their age, but by the end of their Reception year a higher than average proportion reach a good level of development. There is a strong focus on reading across the school through the 'reading championships'; reading records show that pupils read regularly at home too.

Pupils are making better progress throughout the school due to better-quality teaching. Books show that pupils take pride in their work and much of the feedback provided by teachers helps them to improve. Standards in mathematics and reading are good. Attendance is above average and for disadvantaged pupils it is improving due to the diligent work of you and your staff.

Governance is strong. Governors know the school very well; they choose to come in and speak directly with parents and pupils and observe pupils at work. From their observations they create points for improvement which they then follow up through meetings. Governors have raised standards at the school while accommodating an additional class in Reception, at the request of the local authority, due to increased demand for places.

Safeguarding is effective.

Child protection policies and procedures are in place. In circumstances where pupils need further support for their health or well-being, the school involves other agencies in a timely manner. Relevant checks are carried out on members of staff recruited by the school. Staff receive training around the prevention of extremism and safeguarding.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of good quality. There has been a lot of investment in making the site safer and more secure; this has included the construction of a high perimeter fence.

Inspection findings

- Your school improvement priorities are well focused. You are well aware that although boys' achievement is improving, it remains below that of the girls and standards in writing are not consistently as good as they should be. Inspection findings support your identification of this improvement priority. Pupils do not always get enough guidance to help them to create sentences, spell correctly or structure their work in an appropriate way. This is particularly evident when pupils are writing in foundation subjects and topic work.
- Your work to raise boys' achievement is clearly having an impact. Boys were very well engaged in Reception by a well-chosen text about a crocodile. They were captivated by the story as the teacher read with great expression and built suspense. In Year 1, boys were observed making good progress in phonics (the sounds letters make) due to the strong subject knowledge of the teaching assistant. Boys were also observed making good progress in mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- Mathematics is taught well. In Year 2, the teacher divided the class carefully into ability groups and modelled well mathematical methodology so that all pupils made good progress. The least-able pupils showed confidence in solving

problems because of the teacher's careful planning.

- Provision for those pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is strong. This is exemplified by the special arrangements you make for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. They make good progress in developing their physical and social skills through the school's 'sensory snack time' initiative which involves having their breakfast and then having great fun balancing and jumping using a range of sports equipment in the hall. Pupils then line up sensibly and walk smartly to their classrooms, relaxed and ready to learn.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. There have been no permanent or fixed-term exclusions over the past year. Pupils responding to the survey and spoken to by the inspector say that there is no bullying or bullying rarely happens. School records show that there have been a few instances of bullying but they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils understand this term's Christian value of respect and apply it by being polite, considerate and holding the door open for others.
- Middle leaders are working hard to develop their subjects. Tracking of progress in foundation subjects is now much more rigorous. Middle leaders share good practice through a network with local schools and they visit other subject leaders whose practice they feel they can learn from.
- There is a strong focus upon British Values. Pupils proudly display their pledges on the 'Pledgehog', a lovely display adorned with promises of how pupils will be more environmentally friendly. In a very innovative assembly, the school choir lit up the hall with their voices, and pupils showed great respect to each other through their exemplary behaviour. You led the assembly with enthusiasm and captivated pupils with your charismatic presentation.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the gap between the achievement of the boys and the girls is closed
- pupils are supported to write accurately, particularly in foundation subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Sally Kenyon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held discussions with you, your senior leadership team, middle leaders, members of the governing body and your school improvement partner. I considered 123 responses to the pupil questionnaire and took account of 11 responses on the Parent View questionnaire. I scrutinised information around self-evaluation, school improvement planning, attendance, safeguarding, behaviour, progress and lesson planning. I observed an assembly and made short visits to a wide range of lessons.