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Mrs Christina Dring  
Headteacher  
Leyland St Andrew's Church of England Infant School  
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Dear Mrs Dring

### **Short inspection of Leyland St Andrew's Church of England Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 October 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. The school is inclusive and pupils thrive in the nurturing, happy and safe atmosphere. You are highly committed to ensuring that pupils develop good personal and social skills and achieve as well as possible. You are ably supported by the deputy headteacher and, increasingly, by leaders at all levels. Staff share your vision and work together successfully to share their expertise. Pupils also make a good contribution to the school through their positive behaviour and friendly attitudes towards each other.

You have in-depth knowledge of the strengths and areas for further development across the school. Continuing improvement is supported by incisive development planning that is focused on the most important priorities. Governors understand the school's performance in detail and are highly committed to their roles. They make sure they are up to date with training and have a full understanding of their responsibilities, so they provide effective support and challenge to leaders.

Leaders, staff and governors have sustained the strengths that were identified at the last inspection. Your leadership remains strong and all staff promote pupils' good behaviour, personal development and well-being. The areas for improvement have been dealt with successfully. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils' learning. The training they have received and the clear direction from teachers provide them with a good understanding of pupils' learning needs.

The revised marking and feedback policy is providing pupils with clear targets and guidance on how they can improve their work.

Middle leaders have extended their roles in checking the quality of teaching and learning significantly since the last inspection. They now have oversight of the strengths and further developments needed in their subject areas and ensure that school policies are applied consistently. Their expertise is being used to good effect to increase teachers' understanding of the expectations for different subjects, for example through presentations in staff meetings.

Provision in the early years is well organised and motivating. Children are stimulated with imaginative activities that build on their knowledge and experience. Adults provide timely prompts and encouragement to help the children learn and develop effective behaviours for learning. There are plentiful opportunities for children to extend their language, reading, writing and number skills and most children reach a good level of development. Some children start with knowledge and skills well below those which are typical for their age, especially in social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. They make consistently good and often rapid progress to achieve closer to expectations for their age by the end of the Reception Year.

Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is mostly pitched at the right level to enable the majority of pupils to make expected and sometimes better-than-expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching is typically motivating, exciting and interesting for pupils. The more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 make consistently good progress and achieve the standards expected for their age or better. Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively and also make at least good progress. However, some of the pupils who started with knowledge and skills below those which are typical, but who do not have special needs, do not make rapid enough progress in key stage 1. While these pupils often make expected progress, teaching is not precise and explicit enough to help them to fill the gaps in their learning and catch up.

Parents who responded to 'Parent View', the Ofsted online questionnaire, are overwhelmingly positive in their views about the school. A small minority of parents are not wholly satisfied with the school's work and you are rightly exploring how engagement with this group can be improved. The approachability of staff, their rapid response to any concerns and 'individualised support for pupils' are cited frequently as strengths. Parents, rightly, have every confidence in your leadership and referred frequently to 'the headteacher's care and interest in pupils' and 'experienced, professional, yet welcoming and informative' approach.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding procedures are thorough, well understood by all staff and followed rigorously. Your checks on staff and all safeguarding policies meet statutory requirements. Staff have completed relevant training and are kept up to date with any changes so they know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's

welfare. Vulnerable pupils and those whose circumstances are challenging are supported extremely well. You liaise closely with outside agencies and take effective action to secure early help and support where it is needed. Your records are detailed and exemplify the school's approach to promoting equal opportunity and ensuring the safety of pupils.

There have been no recorded bullying incidents in school for several years. Pupils who spoke with me said they have never seen bullying in school and they feel 'very safe'. The thoroughness of safeguarding procedures supports their views and they are endorsed by the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to 'Parent View'. Typical comments from parents include: 'the school provides a very warm caring, nurturing environment to learn in' and 'children are happy, content, confident and making excellent progress in an environment where they feel safe and well cared for.' Pupils' above average attendance reflects parents' and pupils' positive views.

### **Inspection findings**

- You provide clear direction to ensure that the school continues to improve. Your development planning is sharply focused on raising pupils' achievement further in reading, writing and mathematics, as well as promoting their personal and social skills and learning across the curriculum.
- Middle leaders' roles have developed significantly since the last inspection. They have received good professional development to help them lead improvements in teaching and learning. You are aware there is scope to develop these roles further. For example, middle leaders are not yet checking pupils' progress against national curriculum expectations as thoroughly as they could.
- Teachers' performance is managed effectively. You ensure that staff receive the training and coaching they need to keep them up to date and enable them to fulfil their responsibilities.
- The requirements of the national curriculum are taught well in most classes. Pupils' creative and physical skills are developed very effectively across the school. The curriculum is adapted effectively for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and meets the needs of the more able pupils well. However, for some pupils who have low prior attainment, teachers' expectations of the standards they should achieve for their age in writing and mathematics are not high enough.
- The broad curriculum promotes pupils' all-round development well. The development of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is a strength across the school that is valued by parents. Pupils have a good understanding of the school's rules and values, and why it is important to uphold them. They learn about other cultures and faiths and are developing a good understanding of the diversity of British society.
- Pupils make a good contribution to the warm, welcoming atmosphere in school. They are considerate, polite and friendly towards each other in shared areas. They try hard in lessons and are cooperative and attentive.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years and make good progress

from their starting points. Teachers use information from parents and the various settings to plan relevant learning experiences from the start. The majority of children currently in the Reception Year are working at the expectations for their age.

- Pupils' outcomes in the standardised assessments in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 improved steadily up to 2015, when attainment was above average. Pupils' attainment in 2016, however, was below the national average. This is partly due to an unusually high number of pupils joining the school in Year 2, whom teachers did not know as well. A higher proportion of the pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to achieve the expected standards this year.
- The more able pupils typically make good progress from their starting points. They are placed in classes where teaching is pacy and expectations of them are high. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively, with teaching being adapted well to meet their specific needs.
- Many children start school with limited knowledge about language and little understanding of letters and the sounds they make. The early stages of phonics are taught effectively, so the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 is improving. However, some pupils with lower starting points are not taught the more advanced phases of phonics, or how to spell tricky words, as effectively, as they progress through key stage 1. Consequently, their spelling is not developed as well as other aspects of their writing.
- A few pupils with low starting points on entry to the school are also behind in mathematics. This is because the teaching of number and calculation skills is not precise enough to help them to catch up rapidly at key stage 1.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. You have analysed barriers to learning carefully and ensure that additional funds are used to overcome them. For example, the employment of a specialist speech and language assistant and a family support worker enables you to target support where it is most needed. Teaching assistants funded through the pupil premium are well trained and deployed effectively to support learning.
- Partnership working is effective. Your regular meetings, joint training and moderation of assessments in the local cluster of schools enable you to share best practice. Pupils' transition to the junior school is planned in advance so pupils' learning and personal needs are well known on transfer.
- The local authority provides good support and challenge which you welcome. For example, the shared observations and evaluation of pupils' work ensure that assessments are increasingly accurate and inform teaching. You are making good use of consultant support to improve teaching.
- Your purposeful leadership and the well-informed direction from the governing body, together with effective partnership working and training, provide the school with good capacity to sustain improvements.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching is precise and explicit enough to enable pupils who have low starting points to catch up more rapidly in key stage 1, particularly in spelling and calculation skills
- subject leaders check that teachers are working towards the national curriculum expected standards in spelling and calculation.

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

Yours sincerely

Jean Olsson-Law  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I had meetings with you, the deputy headteacher and middle leaders, nine governors, the local authority adviser and a group of pupils. I observed teaching and learning briefly in all classes, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils during lessons. I spoke with parents at the school entrance and took account of 34 responses to 'Parent View', the Ofsted online questionnaire. I looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment and at your self-evaluation and action planning. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe, and records of training, safeguarding checks and behaviour management.

I considered the following lines of enquiry:

- how well leaders and governors have dealt with the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection and the capacity to sustain improvements
- the quality and impact of safeguarding procedures
- how well curriculum planning, teaching and assessment support pupils to achieve the standards expected for their age
- the quality and impact of phonics teaching
- how well the pupil premium is used
- how well the more able pupils achieve.