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Dawn Casson
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Dear Mrs Casson

Short inspection of Saint Lawrence Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 2017, 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 have created an ethos of high expectations supported by a 'can do' attitude. Due to your passion for developing a resilient mind-set, pupils understand that learning is a process they have to work at. They keenly explain mistakes they have learned from, saying they now know not to make those mistakes again. Parents welcome this approach and say it is building pupils' capacity to learn, both academically and for life. One parent commented, 'it is setting my daughter up with a healthy, realistic attitude to cope with the challenges life will throw at her.'

The Saint Lawrence values of love, respect and compassion are clear throughout the school. Staff pride themselves on knowing each pupil really well so they can plan specific learning activities and provide pastoral support where needed. Both parents and staff refer to the school as being 'a family'. One parent said there is, 'a strong family-feel where the value of love is clear and underpins so much of what they do.' Events such as 'values days' help to promote fundamental British values and effectively support pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Pupils are rightly proud of their school. They are confident and enthusiastically share details of their achievements. They were keen to show me their work,

especially when they could show how they had made progress or edited their own work to improve their ideas. They are proud of their leadership responsibilities and the way they all contribute to the school learning council about issues, such as how to improve spelling or promote healthy eating.

Governors responded robustly to the recommendations in the previous inspection report. They know the school well and hold you to account effectively, ensuring that all school improvement projects are tightly linked to clear success criteria. Their regular visits and support for events, such as the school learning council meetings, allows them to test and fully understand the impact of the improvement strategies. They have a good understanding of school assessment information and use this well to measure school improvement.

You have maintained the strengths of the school identified in the previous inspection and successfully addressed the recommendations. You and your leadership team provide effective coaching and training for teachers. You help them to develop their skills and hold them to account. You have nurtured staff and supported their development as leaders, and you rightly identify additional steps required to develop them further.

The accurate self-evaluation and school improvement plan show you know your school very well. You analyse what is required, and make careful use of high-quality support from other providers and the local authority. For example, you have successfully developed an effective approach to the teaching of mathematics that has improved pupils' outcomes. You are highly focused on improving the school still further, and are very clear about your next steps to make the school outstanding. You have already identified the need to refine your assessment process so teachers fully understand how it applies to their pupils, especially in ensuring that pupils secure higher levels of attainment.

Safeguarding is effective.

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

You have promoted safeguarding as everyone's responsibility. Staff understand that a small worry they have might be the missing part of a jigsaw that sheds light on a child's need. Therefore, all concerns, however small, are acted on swiftly and taken seriously. You use external agencies effectively and are not afraid to keep pushing for action to safeguard your pupils.

Pupils say school is a safe place and everyone is friendly. They say there is hardly any bullying, but if there is teachers sort it out quickly and effectively. The vast majority of parents also have this view. The actions logged in school regarding responses to bullying and other poor behaviours are suitable and effective.

Attendance is good, although the absence of specific groups of pupils is higher

than for the rest of the school. You and your team work hard to support pupils who unavoidably miss school. Teachers and teaching assistants adapt work and provide extra support to effectively help them to catch up missed learning.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I considered how well pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported to make good progress from their starting points. The new tracking system implemented by the special educational needs coordinator effectively supports teachers and teaching assistants to plan and deliver specific learning activities that help these pupils to make good progress. Teaching assistants receive good training and have developed their skills well. They work with teachers effectively to plan next steps based on good understanding of their pupils. Support and intervention sessions for pupils are effective, both in and outside of the classroom. A parent spoke of the highly effective 'proactive stance' for pupils needing extra help which means her daughter has taken 'a huge leap forward' since joining Saint Lawrence.
- The school curriculum was identified as an area of strength in the previous inspection report. I looked at this and found that this is still the case. School leaders have carefully designed the curriculum to effectively synthesise the national curriculum subjects with Saint Lawrence's school values and fundamental British values. 'Learning journeys' successfully incorporate knowledge and skills from different subjects into interesting projects. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoyed applying scientific, technological and geographical knowledge to design a wheeled vehicle for a toy figure. Pupils discussed the placement of the axles and thoughtfully explained to me why this is important. In addition, the whole-school focus on developing skills for learning including a 'can do attitude' and resilience means pupils are well prepared for their next steps. One parent told me that her son made a smooth and successful transition to secondary school due to his ability to apply his learning skills alongside his strong resilience.
- I examined how leaders ensure that, throughout the school, pupils reach higher levels of attainment. This is identified as a whole-school priority because teachers have not always recognised when pupils secure greater depth, especially in the quality of their writing. School leaders are sharply aware of this, and are working to ensure that teachers are confident to identify higher levels of attainment when pupils achieve them. Middle leaders have created an effective planning process so teachers quickly adapt learning activities and provide harder work according to the needs of their pupils. Pupils understand they have to be confident with their learning before moving on to their next steps. This approach is helping them to make good progress and achieve greater depth in their understanding and knowledge. However, the tracking systems that middle leaders have established to monitor pupils' progress are still in their infancy and, as they know, need to be evaluated and refined as they are embedded.

- Senior leaders have coached and developed teaching staff to take on positions of responsibility. I looked at the impact of this work and found it effectively contributes to the success of the new curriculum and teaching approach. Middle leaders have successfully trained and supported their colleagues; the learning journeys are successful as a result. As the curriculum becomes more established, these leaders need to develop their leadership skills, holding others to account to further promote standards.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- refine systems to keep track of the progress pupils make in the wider curriculum, and use this information to be confident that pupils achieve their best
- ensure that teachers are clear what skills and knowledge pupils need in order to achieve greater depth of understanding or to reach the higher levels of attainment in their work
- develop the role of middle leaders in holding others to account.

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

Yours sincerely

Lucy English
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and other senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and your local authority adviser. Together you and I planned the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. We jointly visited all classes in the school to observe pupils' learning. I spoke to pupils during lessons and looked at their work. I met formally with a group of pupils to hear them read, look at their work and gather their views about the school. I took account of 77 pupils' responses and 20 staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day, and took account of 49 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 34 written contributions by parents. I looked at a range of documentation, including information about the work of governors, safeguarding records, the school's tracking of pupils' progress and attainment, and the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement.