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Mr Philip Cook
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Cook

Short inspection of Larkrise School

Following my visit to the school on 7 March 2017 with Andrew Penman, Ofsted Inspector, 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 February 2013.

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 a cohesive team and share the same goals and aspirations.

Staff share leaders' drive and determination to ensure that every pupil gets the best possible care and education. Staff go that extra mile to enhance pupils' school experience and prepare them successfully for their future. Staff describe how they are proud to be part of the school and feel supported well by leaders. You and your staff continually reflect on and seek to improve the impact of your work. You are outward looking and welcome the collaboration with schools across the county to share good practice, constantly striving to meet the needs of each pupil effectively.

Pivotal to the effectiveness of your school is the determination of staff to ensure that pupils receive the very best learning opportunities and experiences. For example, on the day of the inspection a team of older pupils had participated in a wheelchair basketball competition. They were visibly buzzing with excitement on their return to school, eager to communicate and share their experiences with others. Teachers have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. Consequently, pupils thrive in this school and make good progress from their starting points both in their learning and personal development.

Staff know and understand pupils' individual needs extremely well. They build

strong relationships with pupils and their families which contribute very effectively to the strong progress pupils make. Parents greatly appreciate the education and care their children receive. Comments by them include, 'the exemplary attitude of the school to learning, whatever the ability of the child, has had a big positive impact' and 'The quality of the specialist teaching is outstanding, as is the commitment the teachers and support staff demonstrate every day.'

At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. These included: how the school ensures that pupils are safe; the effectiveness of leaders in ensuring that pupils receive an effective education; and how teaching promotes good learning, especially in the early years provision. In addition, we would consider how effectively leaders have sustained and built on the quality of their provision since the previous inspection and their capacity to quickly drive forward further improvements. Also considered was how effectively the school responds to any concerns or worries that parents have. These key lines of enquiry are considered below under 'Safeguarding' and 'Inspection findings'.

Safeguarding is effective.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. A strong culture of safeguarding is clearly visible in all aspects of the school's work. There is a shared understanding of the need to protect pupils from all potential risks. Staff receive high-quality training to ensure that they carry out their roles and responsibilities diligently. They know what the potential signs of abuse might be for issues such as child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation, and what actions they rapidly need to take.

Staff understand the importance of completing risk assessments bespoke to the individual needs of the pupil. For example, fire evacuation procedures are detailed for those pupils in wheelchairs or with a sensory loss such as sight or hearing. Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and policies are robust and implemented effectively. Documents and records are detailed, clearly recorded and appropriately stored and shared. You work well with a range of outside agencies to minimise risk to pupils and keep them safe.

The school's systems to check the suitability of staff to work with pupils meet statutory requirements. Leaders and governors are well trained in order to recruit safely. Staff are carefully vetted prior to commencing employment at the school.

Pupils are supervised well at the start and end of each day. Staff ensure that pupils are safe with the high number of vehicles which come onto the school site at these peak times. One parent described these times as a 'slick operation which works very well'. Handovers between escorts and staff are carefully designed to ensure a safe and calm start for pupils at the beginning of the school day.

Parents are confident that their children are kept safe and are well looked after during the day. They welcome the opportunities to regularly visit the school and the

support and guidance they receive to support their child in keeping safe.

Inspection findings

- Under your strong leadership, staff work tirelessly, with a high level of drive and determination, to ensure that pupils receive a good education.
- The quality of teaching over time is typically good. This is as a result of teachers' detailed understanding of the complex needs of each individual pupil. This enables them to plan activities which precisely meet the needs of pupils and excite them to learn. Consequently, pupils across the school make strong progress in their learning from extremely low starting points. Pupils have access to a broad range of subjects, which focus on developing core skills in English and mathematics. They are provided with the opportunity to read books of their choice which closely match their age and stage of development. Early writing skills are taught effectively and pupils, where physically able, are making strong progress in their writing.
- Leaders have recently reviewed the systems used to monitor and track the achievement and progress of pupils, to ensure they remain fit for purpose. The decision was made to modify the tracking of progress and a new system has been introduced. Consequently, leaders are aware that the new assessment process needs to be embedded to make sure that pupils' progress is carefully and consistently tracked across the school.
- Children in the early years provision arrive with skills which are significantly below what is expected. Teachers quickly check what children can and cannot do and carefully plan activities to match their specific needs. For example, the most able children are provided with opportunities to further develop their skills in reading, writing and number and are making good progress. They are able to use their early knowledge of phonics and correctly form letters and shapes.
- Leaders check the learning and progress of pupils through visiting lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work. However, during their monitoring of learning, leaders do not focus clearly enough on the progress of different groups to ensure that they are making the best possible progress.
- At the time of the last inspection, the school was asked to ensure that teachers make the best use of signing and other supportive communication systems, including new technologies. You have done this successfully. Pupils have access to a wide range of communication systems, including new technologies such as the eye gaze tool. Such technologies and communication systems enable pupils to communicate and participate more fully in their learning and accelerate progress. For example, younger pupils used a range of communication systems to participate in a number song, including using a range of sign and symbols and the eye gaze tool. The expressions and look of enjoyment on the faces at being actively involved in the counting activity were tangible.
- Leaders have a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through accurate self-evaluation. Development plans clearly show the actions that leaders are taking to quickly tackle areas identified as needing to improve. However, priorities for improvement are not always consistently checked and

evaluated by leaders, including governors, precisely enough to evaluate their impact. Nevertheless, inspection evidence shows leaders have a good capacity to drive forward identified improvements.

- Most parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of care and education their children receive. During the inspection, the school's policy and procedures for dealing with parental concerns or complaints were carefully reviewed. It showed how procedures are fully adhered to on the rare occasions when they are required. Documentation is detailed and thorough and demonstrates that school leaders, including governors, are not afraid to make difficult decisions to maintain the care and good quality of education that the school provides.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- priorities for improvement identified are frequently checked and evaluated more precisely for their impact
- monitoring of teaching and learning includes a clear focus on the outcomes of different groups of pupils
- the new assessment processes are embedded so that pupils make the very best progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Jen Southall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met with you and your senior leaders. Together, we talked about the improvements which have been made since the last inspection. We carried out a learning walk through classes, accompanied by yourself or a member of the leadership team, and observed an assembly. We also held discussions with five governors, including the chair of the governing body, held a telephone conversation with an officer from the local authority and talked to pupils. We took into consideration the responses of 43 questionnaires completed by staff.

A wide range of documentation was examined, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school's development plan, and information relating to pupils' achievement and progress. Records relating to behaviour, attendance and

safeguarding were also scrutinised.

We spoke to parents during the day. We considered the six responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and six free-text messages were also taken into account.