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Mrs Linda Crombie
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Crombie

Short inspection of Livingstone Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 30 March 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Livingstone Primary School embraces the diversity of its pupils and their families, actively encouraging pupils to celebrate the uniqueness of the school's community. Pupils from various backgrounds, experiences and cultures work together in harmony, seeing each other's differences as something to be valued and celebrated. Consequently, Livingstone Primary School is a vibrant, happy and enthusiastic learning environment.

You and your team continue to face the daily challenges of your school with a stoic determination to provide the best educational opportunities for your pupils. You have a high turnover of pupils arriving and leaving the school, many of whom are in the early stages of learning English. A large majority of these pupils arrive with barriers to their learning, such as extended periods of absence from formal education, or trauma and upheaval in their personal lives.

You are fervent in your belief that no matter what difficulties a significant number of your pupils face, they should be given first class opportunities, both in the classroom and beyond it. In school, your staff are proactive and conscientious in the support that they provide to your pupils, especially those who come from the most vulnerable backgrounds. The curriculum also ensures that pupils develop a breadth in their understanding about the world. For example, the curriculum in science is

well thought out and enables pupils to learn about science through creative and engaging methods. More than this, your passion for extending pupils' experiences in the 'real' world is shown by your extensive range of trips and visits for each year group, such as to Warwick Castle, Covent Garden Opera House, or the HMS Belfast 'kip on a ship'.

Parents are generally very positive about the work of the school, and many are effusive in their praise for school leaders and staff. Where a small minority of parents are not as positive, this is generally around the levels of challenge for their children, including the use of homework, and around the recent change to the organisation of after-school clubs.

Your governors are proactive and knowledgeable about the context and achievement in the school. They have a range of expertise, most notably in education and safeguarding. They use these skills and knowledge to review the additional funding that they receive for disadvantaged pupils, and align this with the achievement, safeguarding and well-being of disadvantaged pupils effectively.

Safeguarding is effective.

One of my key lines of enquiry during the inspection was how well you safeguard pupils. This is particularly pertinent as published information indicates that the attendance, especially of disadvantaged pupils, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is too low.

You are tenacious in following up on pupils who leave the school, to ensure their safety and well-being. Where there are pupils who do not attend well enough, you work on a case-by-case basis, both supporting and challenging families. You liaise with the local authority to improve attendance, including the use of fixed-term penalty notices. While you make a real difference to some pupils, raising the school's overall attendance to meet the national average remains a constant challenge for you and your team.

Staff are trained in the most up-to-date safeguarding guidance and are vigilant to pupils' well-being and safety. The designated leader listens to their concerns carefully, records accurately, and uses this information to ensure that the right external agencies get accurate and detailed information on the pupils who most need their help. You also use this knowledge about your pupils and their families to help them find the support which they sometimes desperately need in the wider community.

Pupils feel safe and are taught how to stay safe in school, online and in the wider community, through a variety of lessons, assemblies and visiting speakers. Pupils particularly emphasised how staff use current events to reiterate the importance of respect, equality and communication in society. Consequently, pupils say that bullying is very rare as 'adults won't allow it' and that if it does occur, they trust staff to deal with it well.

Inspection findings

- One of my key lines of enquiry was to review how you and other leaders are securing improvements in phonics. Not enough pupils achieved the expected standard in the phonics check at the end of Year 1 in 2015.
- Following the low outcomes in 2015, you and the team overhauled the teaching of phonics. You reviewed the phonics programme being used in the school, and the training, support and monitoring of the teaching of phonics. As a result, there was a significant increase in the numbers of pupils who met the expected standard in the check by the end of Year 1 in 2016, most notably the disadvantaged pupils, who met the standard for other pupils nationally.
- There have also been improvements for all pupils in the phonics check at the end of Year 2. Although published results show that disadvantaged pupils by the end of Year 2 did not meet the national average, there was a considerable improvement for these pupils compared to what they achieved in Year 1.
- You continue to support the large numbers of pupils who join you in the early stages of learning English well. For example, in the early years, too many children did not achieve a good level of development in 2014, particularly linked to their reading and language skills. As a result, you have considerably improved the communication with both pre-schools and parents when children prepare to join Reception. This also includes pre-induction home visits and supporting parents so that they can help their children to practise language at home. You have also actively recruited more children into your own pre-school provision, so that they start to learn language and phonics skills earlier.
- At the same time, you have appointed an early years teacher to improve how staff use assessment to plan more effective learning opportunities, especially in reading and writing, for these pupils. Consequently, the number of children achieving a good level of development rose in 2015, and again in 2016. It is now above the national average.
- Current children are being well supported in phonics and use their understanding of words and the sounds that they make to develop their early spelling and writing. Children were keen to show me their most recent work on the walls and proudly explained how they had completed these lengthy written pieces 'without help' and 'on their own'. Children's online learning journals, their 'best work' books and staff assessments, show that children continue to make good progress in their early phonics development.
- An area identified for improvement in the previous inspection was to develop staff's use of assessment systems. In response, you have further embedded, and trained staff in, your chosen assessment system. You undertake regular work scrutiny and moderation with other schools. This helps you to check the accuracy and consistency of the information being provided by staff, and to ensure that staff are using assessment well to plan appropriate learning opportunities for their pupils.
- Published information alone does not give you a clear picture of all pupils' progress because often your pupils arrive mid-year and/or mid-key stage and don't always achieve expected standards in the end of key stage checks and

tests. For example, pupils who had been with you in the early years attained well at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 in reading, writing and mathematics. However, those pupils who joined you at different points throughout key stage 1 did not attain as highly as all pupils nationally.

- Consequently, you use your ongoing monitoring and assessment to assure yourselves that you add real value to pupils' learning in the time that they are with you. You thoroughly assess these pupils' starting points when they join you. This means you have a strong understanding of what they know and can do when they arrive at the school.
- Using this information, your team then takes effective action to secure the right teaching and intervention to help pupils make good progress during the time that they are with you. As a result, you have maintained, and continued to improve, the good-quality teaching, learning and assessment in the school.
- A final key line of enquiry for the inspection was to review how leaders are securing standards at key stage 2. Since the previous inspection, you have extended your provision to include pupils in Year 5 and 6. You and governors have ensured that the development into extending the school has been well thought out. You have recruited a key stage 2 specialist as an assistant headteacher to the school. You have also reorganised the structure of leadership and teaching for key stages 1 and 2 to ensure that there is a breadth of skills across the school. This results in newer teachers being well supported by more experienced colleagues.
- Published information indicates that progress in 2016 for Year 6 was broadly in line with the national average for reading, writing and mathematics. However, although attainment in English grammar, punctuation and spelling was in line with the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils, not enough pupils achieved the combined expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Your assistant headteacher has worked quickly to identify the pupils, most notably in Year 5 and 6, who are not making the progress that they need to in order to achieve the expected standards. This work is allowing you to be more strategic this year in targeting pupils who require additional support and/or intervention, more effectively.
- However, you have identified in your evaluation that there is still more work to do to ensure that pupils are being identified and challenged quickly enough to achieve a deeper understanding, and attain the highest standards, especially in Years 3 and 4.
- The special educational needs coordinator ensures that staff are clear on the difference between pupils who are in the early stages of learning English and those who have special educational needs. She uses the funding to ensure that the right pupils receive the correct support, whether this is in lessons, or in securing the appropriate testing or external specialists to check pupils' development, and validate her assessments of pupils. She uses this information to guide staff to ensure that pupils are well supported to learn well in lessons.
- Some aspects of the school's website do not include the most up-to-date documentation. Inspection evidence confirms that governors had already

identified prior to the inspection that the website does not reflect accurately the effective practice in the school. As a result, they have supported the recruitment of an additional assistant headteacher, who will take this as one of their responsibilities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teaching quickly identifies when pupils are ready to achieve more and deepen their learning, including through high-quality homework, and ensures that more pupils attain the highest standards
- leaders continue to use the effective strategies already in place to support pupils and their families to raise attendance towards the national average
- the website is kept up to date with the most recent policies and documentation, acts as a good communication tool for parents and carers, and reflects the effective work in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Kim Pigram
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders, subject leaders and three members of the governing body, including the chair. You and I visited classrooms and reviewed pupils' work while we were in some of those lessons. I also undertook a work scrutiny that looked at standards in English and mathematics, and another that looked at pupils' work in science, in key stages 1 and 2.

I spoke with pupils, took account of 38 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and also reviewed over 100 parental responses from the most recent parents evening this year. I also took account of 24 staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.

I also reviewed a range of school documentation, including information related to school development planning, self-evaluation, the spending of additional funding related to the pupil premium, sports funding, safeguarding and pupils' progress.