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Mr Alastair Sutherland
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Sutherland

Short inspection of St Luke's Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 April 2017 with Debbie Redshaw, Her Majesty's 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 have led the school with determination and resolve through a period of significant change. Importantly, you have built a strong and cohesive team of senior leaders who share your deep commitment to every child at St Luke's. As a result of the school's strong leadership and your colleagues' effective work, pupils develop the positive attitudes, confidence and skills they need to learn well and make progress. This was exemplified by one pupil who told inspectors, 'Teachers give us courage to help us tackle problems.'

Inspectors identified three areas for improvement at the school's last inspection. First to further improve the quality of teaching, second to improve the standard of pupils' writing and third to develop pupils' confidence and skills in solving mathematical problems. You have tackled these well. You have improved the way you assess pupils' learning and strengthened the teaching of writing. You have also made sure that pupils have more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to reason and solve problems. As a result, pupils are making stronger progress in these crucially important areas of learning. Importantly, however, you know that your new assessment system needs to be fully embedded and teachers need to use it consistently and effectively to assess how well pupils are deepening their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Your summary self-evaluation provides a clear and accurate picture of the school's effectiveness. For example, you know that some areas of the early years provision need further work. These are clearly identified in the school's development plan and the

actions you are taking are beginning to make a difference to children's learning and progress in Nursery and Reception. We agreed that developing a more consistent approach to supporting children's communication and interaction skills in the early years is an important next step.

Governors make a strong contribution to the school's leadership and management. This is because they work closely and effectively with you and the senior leadership team. You make sure that governors are knowledgeable about all areas of the school's work, you actively involve them in discussions and decision-making and you value the way they challenge you and hold you to account. For example, governors are knowledgeable about the things that make pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities more vulnerable than other pupils. They have used this knowledge to challenge you about the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements and, importantly, to assure themselves that pupils are safe and protected from harm.

The parents who made a written comment on Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and those who spoke to inspectors, were unequivocally positive about the school's work. Many parents highlighted the hard work and dedication of leaders and the staff team and the importance you give to 'getting it right' for all pupils. However, some parents reported concerns about the effectiveness of communication between home and school. You agreed that further work is needed to strengthen this crucially important day-to-day link between families and the school.

The actions taken by you, senior and middle leaders and governors have placed the school in a strong position to secure further improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

You and your staff are knowledgeable about the things that make children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities vulnerable. This is because you provide regular high-quality training and updates for staff and you make sure that concerns about pupils are identified and reported in a timely way. You work in close partnership with health practitioners to make sure that pupils' health and medical needs are met. Similarly, you are vigilant in checking that pupils who are fully dependent on adults for their daily care needs are safe and protected.

You work closely and effectively with other professionals and services to make sure that pupils who may be vulnerable are identified quickly and their families receive the timely and effective help and support they need.

Inspection findings

- I was keen to find out more about how you are assessing and tracking the progress pupils are making and whether this gives you an accurate picture of how well they are doing. Assessment information shows that the progress pupils make in English and

mathematics has improved steadily since the school's last inspection. You developed a new approach to assessing and tracking pupils' progress in 2015/16 in response to changes to the national curriculum. You quickly realised that this did not give you a sufficiently clear or accurate picture of how well pupils were doing and, rightly, you have radically redesigned your approach this school year. You now have a well-thought-out method of assessing pupils' learning, which is helping you to pinpoint whether they are securing their knowledge, understanding and skills or working at greater depth. An important next step is to make sure that teachers use this new system to check whether the most able pupils are deepening their knowledge, understanding and skills before they move onto new work.

- I was also interested in the way you use the pupil premium to improve the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils. Again, you have changed your approach since 2015/16 and, as a result, you are using this additional funding in a more targeted and effective way. Case studies show that disadvantaged pupils are making better progress in their social and emotional development as a result of the changes you have made. Similarly, disadvantaged pupils who receive targeted support to improve their reading, writing and mathematics skills are using these skills more confidently in real-life situations. Importantly, governors keep a close eye on how you use the pupil premium and its impact on disadvantaged pupils.
- In our meeting at the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at the work in pupils' English and mathematics books. We also agreed that we would ask some of the most able pupils to read to an inspector. We learned that pupils are being taught writing skills more effectively and we could see the quality and standard of their writing improving over time. Similarly, we could see that pupils are using and applying their mathematical knowledge and skills more confidently and fluently. The most able pupils read fluently and accurately using their phonics knowledge to decode unfamiliar words. They read with expression, showing understanding of character and the plot sequence. Some pupils could infer meaning from what they were reading, but others found this more challenging.
- You know that some areas of the early years provision need further work. We visited the early years classrooms together and looked at the children's learning and development records. Some records provide clear and detailed information about the progress children are making, while others give a less clear picture. In the classrooms, children were interested and engaged in a range of learning activities. We agreed, however, that the indoor and outdoor areas do not provide a rich enough range of experiences and learning opportunities for all children. We also agreed that the activities children choose for themselves are not linked closely enough to all children's interests, needs and different abilities. I could see that the actions you are taking are having an impact on the progress children are making in the early years. However, I could also see that some children's communication and interaction skills are not consistently well supported.
- Lastly, I wanted to know more about what you are doing to improve pupils' attendance and how well this is working. Although overall attendance remains below the national average for primary schools, it is clear that the attendance of individual pupils improves as a result of the effective support you provide for families. You work particularly closely with pupils who have complex health and medical needs to maximise their attendance and minimise the impact of periods of absence on their

learning and progress. This strong child- and family-centred approach is one of many examples of the high value you give to listening to pupils and their families and your deep commitment to working out how to 'get it right' for them.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the areas for improvement you have identified in the early years provision are tackled quickly and effectively
- the development of all children's communication and interaction skills in the early years is consistently well supported
- teachers check whether the most able pupils are deepening their knowledge, understanding and skills before they move on to new work
- day-to-day communication between home and school is strong and effective.

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

Yours sincerely

Nick Whittaker
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you and your senior and middle leaders, five representatives from the governing body and a group of pupils. Inspectors visited lessons with senior leaders, looked at the work in pupils' books and folders and talked to them about their learning. Inspectors considered the results from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 18 written responses from parents. Inspectors also considered nine responses to the online staff survey and 12 responses to the online pupil survey. Inspectors examined a range of documents including: information about safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and information about pupils' progress.