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8 June 2017

Lisa Mayes  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Mayes

### **Short inspection of Lethbridge Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 17 May 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. In recent months, there have been significant changes to the leadership of the school. You have recently been appointed as headteacher and the two new deputy headteachers have just been confirmed in their appointments. As headteacher, you are highly ambitious for pupils and communicate clearly your high expectations of staff. You and the new leadership team have taken direct action to address areas for school improvement. You have open lines of communication with parents and an evident commitment to ensuring that their children achieve their best. This means that parents are sure any concerns will be listened to and firmly believe the school is well led and managed. The overwhelming majority would recommend the school to another parent.

At the time of the last inspection, the school was asked to give pupils sufficient opportunities to use their initiative in lessons and use their learning skills independently. The school's work in this regard is effective. For example, teachers provide a range of resources that help pupils practise independently the skills they learn in English and mathematics.

The school was also asked to develop the roles of middle leaders. Leaders of English and mathematics have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects and the progress pupils are making. Governors check on the standards in English and mathematics carefully, but they are less clear on pupils' standards in science and some foundation subjects.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

School staff know the pupils in their care and their families well. Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed, up to date and carefully maintained. The school communicates very clearly, for example on its website, that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff and governors know what to do if they have a concern about a child. The induction arrangements for new staff are effective and emphasise the school's culture of safeguarding children, so that any risk is minimised.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They are clear that they know who to talk to if they have a worry or concern and that adults will quickly help them. Parents very strongly agree that their children are happy, safe and well looked after in school. Pupils have a clear understanding of bullying and say this does not happen very often. The majority of parents agree. The school's work to promote pupils' safety online and when using social media is raising awareness for parents as well as pupils.

## **Inspection findings**

- My first line of enquiry was to check how leaders are ensuring effective provision for writing in the school. Since the last inspection, pupils have often achieved highly in writing at the end of key stage 2. However, in 2016 their progress and attainment in writing were below national figures. In response, leaders have strengthened the checks they make of teachers' assessments and increased moderation activities with other schools. Leaders have raised expectations even further of pupils' handwriting and spelling across the school. Many pupils, both boys and girls, present their work well and have clear, fluent handwriting. However, handwriting is inconsistent between year groups, particularly in key stage 1. Recent changes to the way children in the early years are taught to form their letters are making it easier for children to write fluently. However, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are only experiencing these changes now, with the result that some still have to catch up with their handwriting skills.
- I looked in particular at the quality of boys' writing. Many boys in the school write well, particularly by the end of key stage 2. Over time, boys often achieve better in writing than boys do nationally. However, girls make better progress in writing than boys across the school. For example, at both Year 6 and in the early years in 2016, there were marked differences in the numbers of girls and boys achieving well at age-related expectations in writing. Leaders have ensured that teachers plan activities that engage boys in writing across the school. For example, in Year 5 the boys' writing project with the local secondary school has led to increasingly high-quality writing from boys. However, leaders and early years teachers agree that there is still more to do to ensure boys engage with activities that promote their early writing skills during their Reception Year.
- My next line of enquiry was to check how well disadvantaged pupils do in the school. Leaders monitor carefully the progress of disadvantaged pupils. They put in place effective strategies, such as additional support for girls in mathematics in Year 6. Consequently, current disadvantaged pupils are making progress close to

that of other pupils. Teachers' expectations for disadvantaged pupils are high and, as a result, there are times when their progress is stronger than that of other pupils. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance is close to that of other pupils and few of them are persistently absent. Governors have a clear rationale for the allocation of the additional funds for disadvantaged pupils and have ensured that this money is effectively spent.

- Finally, I looked at how well the school supports pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Evidence seen during the inspection showed that these pupils do well. Tasks are matched accurately to their differing needs. In some instances, for example in mathematics at the end of key stage 2, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make stronger progress than other pupils. Additional adults are deployed effectively. Many strike a delicate balance between supporting pupils and promoting pupils' independent skills. Parents comment on the high quality of support their children receive from school staff.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvements in pupils' handwriting and spelling are embedded across the school
- the difference between boys' and girls' achievement in writing is reduced by ensuring that boys in the early years are supported to make full use of activities for writing, so that their early writing skills are improved
- governors develop further their monitoring of science and foundation subjects so that they can more effectively challenge leaders about pupils' achievement in these areas.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah O'Donnell  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and other senior leaders. We talked about developments in the school since the last inspection. I looked at safeguarding records and tested out your recruitment and vetting procedures. I held discussions with governors, including the chair of governors. I talked to teachers and support staff around the school. Together, we visited lessons and carried out a learning walk across the

school. I observed pupils during breaktime and lunchtime. I met with a group of pupils to talk about their life at school. I considered the 74 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey and the 39 comments submitted. I received a letter from a parent.