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Mrs Jeanette Dunn
Headteacher
St Luke's CofE (Aided) Primary School
Branccliffe Lane
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Dear Mrs Dunn

Short inspection of St Luke's CofE (Aided) Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 November 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 March 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 established a culture where staff know the pupils well. One parent who spoke with me said of the school, 'It's more like a family.' You, the other staff and governors are keen that pupils should benefit from the family atmosphere you have created. Relationships are strong. At the same time, you create opportunities that prepare pupils well for life in a much larger establishment when they move onto their secondary school. For example, you organise residential trips and work with the local theatre in Worksop.

Pupils enjoy representing their school, for example as part of the football team, which won its first trophy last year. You encourage pupils to contribute to the life of the school. Pupils' suggestions are considered by staff. Recently, you formed a girls' football team following a suggestion made by pupils. Pupils represent their classmates on the school council. The council organised fundraising events for charities such as Macmillan Cancer Support and Children in Need. Pupils told me that they learn that not everyone is as fortunate as they are.

St Luke's is a friendly and welcoming school. Pupils of all ages greeted me warmly and showed their very good manners throughout the day. Parents told me that their children enjoy coming to school. The majority of parents said that they felt able to

speak to teachers, or to you, if they had any questions or concerns. A few parents, however, felt that communication could be improved. They would appreciate more information from the school, for example about their child's progress.

You have welcomed the support that the local authority has provided. It has helped you to be outward-looking in your approach to school improvement. You have forged strong links with some neighbouring schools. Teachers and teaching assistants have benefited from visiting these schools to observe teaching and learning in another setting. They have shared their observations with the rest of the staff at St Luke's. You have used this information as a springboard to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to ensure that the school's plans for improvement were detailed, with targets and timelines. The plans I examined were clear in these respects. They contained all the information you and the governing body need to ensure that developments are on track.

You were also asked to improve the quality of teaching and learning. During our tour of the classes, pupils told me that they have opportunities to comment on each other's work. Pupils know what they need to do to improve their work through the individual targets teachers have set for them. They also explained that their teacher checks their work and moves them on to work that is more difficult as soon as they are ready to tackle it.

In most classes, teachers know what pupils already understand and can do. They use this information to set work that is well matched to pupils' next steps in learning. Pupils' books, however, showed that sometimes this is not the case. This means that sometimes teachers do not build on pupils' understanding well enough to ensure that they make the best possible progress from their different starting points.

Safeguarding is effective.

You make sure that all the appropriate checks are made before staff and volunteers start working at the school. The governing body understands its responsibilities well. Governors have received the relevant training in safeguarding and in the safer recruitment of staff. You make sure that staff have received the most up-to-date training. They know how to raise a concern about a child's welfare, should one arise.

Pupils are confident that they are safe in school. They understand well that fire drills in school are important. They told me that they feel safe because they would know what to do in the unlikely event of an emergency.

Pupils said that poor behaviour and bullying are very rare. They were confident that they could speak with a trusted adult who would successfully deal with any bullying, should it ever happen. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They understand, for example, how to keep themselves safe when they use the internet.

They appreciate that visitors come into school to teach them about fire and water safety.

Inspection findings

- The progress pupils made in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 in 2016 was much too low. You made this the focus for improvement last year. Some staff have benefited from training, which they have shared with colleagues. They have raised their expectations of pupils in line with the greater demands of the national curriculum. Teachers also made better use of resources. They now use these to help pupils understand concepts and apply their skills to mathematical problems. By the end of 2017, the progress pupils had made in mathematics had improved considerably and was in line with that seen nationally.
- In 2017, you noticed that pupils' attainment in spelling, punctuation and grammar was lower than their attainment in other subjects. You took time to consider the reasons behind this so that you could take the right approach to improving standards. You have recently changed the way that spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught across the school. Teachers are implementing the new approach weekly. However, as we looked at books, we noticed that some teachers are not making sure that pupils use the spelling, punctuation and grammar skills they have learned in English when they write in other subjects. Teachers sometimes do not use their assessment of what pupils already know and can do to plan lessons that build progressively on their skills. You recognise that the new approach is not consistently in place for all pupils.
- You have also noticed that too few pupils achieve the higher standard in reading by the end of Year 6. You have recently purchased some reading books and a structure which will enable teachers to develop pupils' comprehension and inference skills. During a recent parents' evening, you provided information for parents to help them understand the new approach. Pupils told me that they enjoy the Reading Rangers' scheme that encourages them to read more often. The new strategy to improve standards in reading throughout key stage 2 is well understood by staff. It is too early to judge its impact on standards.
- Overall attendance is at least in line with the national average. In recent years, however, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been below that seen nationally. You highlight the importance of regular attendance through comments in newsletters. In assembly, you talk to pupils about the importance of coming to school every day. Pupils receive awards in assembly for high rates of attendance. By the end of 2017, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils had risen and was above that seen nationally.
- You recognise the importance of celebrating pupils' achievements. 'Pupil of the Week' and 'Fabulous Friday' provide good focuses for assemblies. Pupils are recognised for their achievements, both in and out of school. Parents are welcome to join assemblies to share their child's moment in the spotlight. The 'Tremendous Tree' in the hall stands as a reminder of the achievements that have been celebrated.
- You, the other staff and governors place the school at the heart of the

community. Pupils visit church for important events such as harvest festival. Local visitors teach pupils about Diwali. Strong links with the theatre in Worksop offer pupils the opportunity to take part in a production on a large stage. This reflects your determination to provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils within the environment of a small school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they investigate ways of improving communication with parents
- teachers, particularly in key stage 2, raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve and make effective use of assessment to ensure that pupils of all abilities achieve the highest standards of which they are capable
- teachers consistently implement the recent strategies to improve pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills, and insist that pupils use these skills every time they write.

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

Yours sincerely

Di Mullan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, the assistant headteacher, two other members of staff and three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.

I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. I held a meeting with 10 pupils and spoke with other pupils informally in class.

Together, we visited every class to see the learning that was taking place, and we examined a range of pupils' books. We discussed the progress that pupils make across a range of subjects.

I scrutinised a range of documentation, including that relating to the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. I looked at information about attendance and the school's use of pupil premium funding, the reports you present to governors and documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils.

I considered the five responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 12 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the survey of pupils' views.