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Mr John Hurst
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hurst

Short inspection of Lever House Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 December 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 December 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and the deputy headteacher's exemplary leadership have brought about improvements to the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make, particularly in reading and mathematics. The carefully considered appointment of your deputy headteacher has further strengthened the capacity of the leadership of teaching and learning and is bringing about continued improvement.

Your comprehensive monitoring ensures that you have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas that now require further enhancement. You have correctly turned your attention to accelerate the progress that pupils make in writing, particularly in key stage 2. You also are taking appropriate actions to refine the work of leaders responsible for subjects other than English and mathematics. This is to ensure that subject leaders make best use of the assessment information available for their subjects, to track pupils' progress precisely and ensure that pupils realise their full potential.

Lever House Primary is a vibrant and enticing place to learn where pupils are encouraged to participate in continuous self-improvement. Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum that goes beyond the minimum requirements of the national curriculum. Pupils make excellent use of technology to support their learning. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and display exemplary conduct in lessons and around the school. Those pupils who spoke with me during the inspection said they enjoy coming to school, felt safe and that teachers and other adults are helpful. Older pupils relish the challenge they receive in

lessons and the opportunities they have to amend, improve and share their work in school and beyond.

Parents share pupils' high regard for the school. Nearly all parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, supported the school and recognised the positive impact teachers have on their children's learning and confidence. The comment 'We love Lever House. My child loves learning and is always enthusiastic about school. Any issues have been dealt with promptly' typifies the positive responses.

Senior leaders demonstrate a strong and proven capacity to bring about improvement. Their effective actions have addressed the area for development identified at the last inspection. This focused on improving the quality of teaching in the school and accelerating pupils' progress.

The work seen in pupils' books and the detailed tracking of school-based assessments confirm that leaders' actions have successfully brought about considerable improvement in the pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. The recent provisional outcomes of the 2017 end of key stages 1 and 2 assessments confirmed the positive impact of leaders' actions. However, pupils' progress in writing, although improving, was not as strong and was in line with the national average.

Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved. Appropriate amendments to policies and the strategies used to teach English and mathematics mean that pupils now benefit from high-quality teaching. Teachers and teaching assistants are better trained and are more knowledgeable about the strategies to teach reading, writing and mathematics. They use a range of these strategies effectively to systematically develop pupils' skills. This helps pupils to master the subject, particularly in mathematics and reading. Teachers effectively promote pupils' awareness of audience, purpose and the effect of their writing in a variety of contexts. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of these actions on pupils' progress and attainment. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, attain at least as well as other pupils nationally because of high-quality teaching.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are of high quality and fit for purpose. Knowledgeable staff diligently implement the school's policies relating to safeguarding. Leaders ensure the completion of statutory checks and act effectively to confirm the suitability of staff to work with children.

Staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. Staff are vigilant about the potential risks that pupils may face. Records are meticulously kept. Leaders share information with parents and the appropriate authorities effectively to ensure pupils' safety.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school because of their frequent and detailed monitoring and effective self-evaluation. Sharply focused evaluation of teachers' assessments ensures that you have a

detailed understanding of pupils' attainment across the curriculum. Leaders closely monitor pupils' progress in English and mathematics and make good use of this information to take the right actions to bring about rapid improvements to learning.

- Leaders responsible for subjects other than English and mathematics demonstrate a clear understanding of where the strengths and development priorities lie in their subjects. However, they do not track pupils' progress in the same depth as is done in English and mathematics. As a result, it is not easy for them to check that the most able pupils are realising their potential and developing their knowledge and understanding in sufficient depth.
- Senior leaders make good use of information available to help staff to improve their practice through sharply focused discussions about pupils' progress. You hold teachers and subject leaders closely to account for the impact of their actions through well-considered performance management objectives that link directly to pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders make effective use of the small amount of pupil premium funding the school receives to provide additional support and access to activities that help disadvantaged pupils overcome their barriers to learning. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils make strong progress and attain well.
- The quality of teaching in English and mathematics in key stage 1 and key stage 2 is strong and bringing about rapid improvements to standards. Well-considered changes to the way in which teachers promote learning have brought about considerable improvements in pupils' progress. This is particularly the case in reading and mathematics. However, you rightly recognise that progress in writing, although improving swiftly, still needs further enhancement. Your actions to accomplish this are correct.
- Appropriate training ensures that teachers have good knowledge of a range of strategies to teach English and mathematics, which they use effectively. Additionally, you have developed a consistent approach to how teachers develop pupils' philosophy and attitude to learning. As a result, pupils are confident learners who willingly engage in conversation with teachers, teaching assistants and each other about how they can improve and enhance their work. Teachers make good use of links to other subjects to provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to write at length and consolidate their skills, including in long-term projects. In subjects other than English and mathematics, pupils study a wide range of topics, including Mandarin Chinese and learning in the outdoors. They develop their knowledge and understanding well. However, occasionally in some topic-based subjects, including geography and science, teachers sometimes do not ensure that the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged to make the progress they could to develop their skills and understanding at greater depth.
- Attendance has remained at consistently better than the national average for a considerable time. However, during the school year 2015/16, the proportion of some groups of pupils who were absent rose well above the national average. Current and more up-to-date information shows that attendance is back to where it has been historically. Your detailed monitoring shows that the vast majority of absences are for good reasons, often linked to the small numbers of pupils involved, medical needs or genuine illness. Well-established systems ensure that staff swiftly follow up and check any concerns about a pupil's attendance. Leaders share any concerns that they may have with the right authorities and encourage parents to make sure that their children

attend well.

- Pupils typically demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and exemplary conduct around the school. Appropriate supervision of lunchtimes and playtimes allows pupils to play and socialise safely together. Pupils who spoke with the inspector found it difficult to recollect any incidents of bullying. Leaders swiftly act upon any concerns. Meticulously kept records show that leaders and governors take appropriate actions, in line with the school policy, to consider and act upon any complaints raised by parents.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build upon the effective actions already taken to enhance pupils' progress in writing in key stage 2
- leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics refine how they track and evaluate pupils' progress to ensure that teachers promote further pupils' understanding and knowledge at greater depth.

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

Yours sincerely

John Nixon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the deputy headteacher and some subject leaders in the school. I held a meeting with governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, and with the local authority adviser. I spoke with pupils during lessons and around the school. I took account of the information contained within the responses to the online questionnaires for parents, Parent View, and those for staff. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

I visited classrooms with the deputy headteacher to observe pupils' learning, looked at their work in books and work published online. I reviewed information about pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation documentation, action plans and other policies. I evaluated the impact of the school's procedures and policies to keep children safe, including while they are online. I also scrutinised your recruitment checks and record-keeping.