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Ms Kate Fairbrother
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Fairbrother

Short inspection of Landkey Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 March 2018, 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 September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You lead your dedicated staff team with a positive, calm authority and are extremely well supported by the deputy headteacher. You make sure that the school meets pupils' emotional, behavioural and social needs, and your staff value and care for every child. All of the staff members who responded to the staff questionnaire said that they are proud to work at the school. They feel respected and valued by school leaders and by the local community.

You and your staff are assisted well by governors who provide the right balance of support and challenge. Governors make sure that they receive the information necessary to understand fully the performance of different groups of pupils. They use advice from external consultants to check that their judgements are accurate. They also take full advantage of training opportunities to ensure that they ask you and other leaders the right questions. The school is further challenged and supported effectively by the local authority through the school's county adviser.

The school values its partnership with parents and carers, who are encouraged to play an active role in their children's learning. For example, staff give parents of children in the early years the opportunity to contribute to the school's detailed daily assessments of their child's learning by adding to a digital diary.

At the previous inspection, school leaders were asked to ensure that teachers provided more opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in real-life problems. You were

also asked to improve the accuracy of pupils' grammar and spelling. You have secured high-quality training for teachers and teaching assistants in these areas. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills, as shown in pupils' workbooks. During the inspection, Year 1 pupils were asked to study a picture of a very busy kitchen. They were challenged to find objects that could be used for measurement. One pupil told me, 'I have chosen the clock because you can use it to measure time.'

Improved teaching has led to significant improvements in pupils' outcomes in mathematics. This was shown in the 2017 examinations where, at both key stages 1 and 2, the proportion of pupils reaching expected levels exceeded the national averages. Half of Year 6 pupils reached the higher level. This was more than twice the national average. Pupils' outcomes in grammar, punctuation and spelling also improved in 2017, with 97% of pupils achieving the expected level in Year 6 and 67% reaching the higher level. Again, these outcomes were well above the national averages. You are aware of the need to continue raising the standards of boys' writing across the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and other leaders, including governors, have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Training is up to date, records are well maintained and you make appropriate checks on staff before they start employment. Governors have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. The monitoring carried out by the governor responsible for safeguarding is particularly effective. You work well with external agencies to make sure that pupils receive the support that they need.

Pupils receive useful information to help them stay safe in school, in the community and when online. They told me that they feel very safe at school and enjoy playing an active role in keeping everyone safe. For example, one pupil monitor explained why it is important to check when pupils enter the school at breaktimes. He noted, 'If there was suddenly a fire in the school, I would know from my list who was in the building.' Pupils said that bullying is very rare and that members of staff act quickly to correct poor behaviour. The vast majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire or spoke with me during the inspection said that their children are happy and safe at your school. One parent told me, 'The teachers are great and will go the extra mile to meet the needs of the children.'

Inspection findings

At the start of the inspection, we agreed the particular aspects of the school's work on which the inspection would focus.

- The first line of enquiry considered how effectively leaders have ensured that boys and girls are making good rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. The school's self-evaluation highlights differences in the achievement of boys and girls in most year groups.
- Leaders' assessments of pupils' progress during the current academic year are

accurate, as shown by the ongoing improvement in pupils' workbooks. During our visits to classrooms in both key stages, we compared the progress being made by girls and boys in each class. We found clear evidence to show that current rates of progress are similar for boys and girls throughout the school.

- The next line of enquiry focused on what leaders have done to challenge boys to make better progress in writing at both key stages. While overall Year 6 outcomes were good in 2017, there was a significant difference in progress between girls and boys in writing. Girls' progress was well above the national average, including progress to the higher level. Boys, however, made much slower progress over time and none reached the higher level. At key stage 1, girls achieved above the national average for writing while boys were below, with no boys reaching the higher level.
- You described a number of strategies that have been introduced to encourage boys to engage more fully in writing across the curriculum. One initiative has involved teachers using questioning effectively to encourage pupils to think more deeply about their learning. We saw an excellent example of this during a writing activity in Year 6, in which pupils worked in groups to assess and improve two samples of creative writing from the previous lesson. The high quality of the teacher's questioning enabled all of the pupils to forensically examine the texts with great skill. This resulted in a deepening of pupils' awareness of how words can be used to evoke feelings and moods. One boy suggested, 'When the writer describes how the character was lingering around, it makes me feel vulnerable. Something is going to happen!'
- Pupils' workbooks show that teachers and support staff challenge pupils to reach higher levels in writing. For example, a Year 1 pupil had used direct quotations in a description, and the teacher had challenged him to add quotation marks with support. The pupil clearly took notice of this challenge and included numerous correctly punctuated direct quotations in his next piece of work. The school's information about pupils' progress shows that standards of boys' writing are rising across the school. For example, boys in Year 6 have made strong progress in writing, and a number are working at the higher level.
- The third line of enquiry assessed how well leaders check that additional funding is used effectively to improve outcomes for the most able disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1. In 2017, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were high compared with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. However, outcomes have been lower in key stage 1 over time, and very few disadvantaged pupils are reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders and governors have identified the need to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils as a major priority for the school. They have taken bold steps to improve how they identify barriers that hold back pupils' learning and have introduced helpful initiatives. Governors have used additional funding to enable the school's deputy headteacher to lead the support programme for these pupils. She has a detailed understanding of how additional funding has been used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1. Their current rates of progress are similar to, or higher than, those shown by other pupils working at greater depth.
- The final line of enquiry investigated what action leaders have taken to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Overall rates of absence at the school have been

lower than the national average over time. However, in 2016, the rate of absence for pupils eligible for free school meals was well above national averages and in the top 10% nationally. The rate of persistent absence for this group was also well above the national average. Leaders have introduced a wide range of strategies to improve attendance, which have been successful for this specific group of pupils. Governors have been involved in working to find solutions for families that struggle with this important aspect of school life. Consequently, the rate of attendance improved for this group in 2017 and continues to rise. However, it is still below the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- current initiatives become embedded so that boys' writing continues to improve across the school
- rates of overall and persistent absence continue to reduce so that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is in line with national averages.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Hodson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher, various school leaders and a group of governors. We visited the Reception Year and classrooms in both key stages to assess pupils' progress. I looked at pupils' workbooks and talked with pupils in classes and at a separate meeting. We considered the school's information on the progress being made by current pupils.

I looked at a range of documentary evidence. This included the school's evaluation of its own performance and plans for improvement. I looked at various documents related to safeguarding, including the central record and examples of recent referrals made to external agencies. I also assessed current rates of attendance for groups of pupils and specifically for pupils eligible for free school meals.

I gathered views from parents and took account of 41 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. I received several free-text responses from parents and results of the responses to the questionnaires for staff and pupils.