

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



23 May 2018

Mrs Mary Freeman
Executive Headteacher
Luston Primary School
Westland View
Luston
Leominster
Herefordshire
HR6 0EA

Dear Mrs Freeman

Short inspection of Luston Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 May 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.

Your strong and tenacious leadership is central to the continued improvement of the school. You work closely with staff and governors to ensure that Luston is an inclusive school at the heart of its community. As a result of the high standards that you and the staff set, pupils make good progress and thrive on their journey through school.

Pupils' personal development is extremely well considered. Relationships between staff and pupils are superb. Consequently, pupils are happy and love coming to school. They receive a wide range of enrichment opportunities, which have a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They enjoy activities such as learning outdoors, playing musical instruments, competing in school sports, taking on additional responsibility or attending the broad range of extra-curricular clubs. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school's ethos. All of the parents that completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school to others. Comments from parents included: 'Every teacher in the school knows every child', and 'It is a really good school because of its holistic approach to education.'

You and the governing body have a clear and accurate grasp of the strengths and priorities for the school. You use your analysis of pupils' attainment and progress to

identify where improvements need to be made. Improvement plans are detailed and ensure that action takes place in a timely manner. In September 2017, a hard federation was formed between Luston Primary School and another local school. You became executive headteacher, and a head of school was appointed to manage the school on a day-to-day basis. You and the governors have managed this process seamlessly. There are already successful examples of sharing best practice and expertise across the two schools. The governing body, that governs both schools in the federation, is highly effective. Astutely led by the chair, governors provide an excellent level of challenge and support.

Teaching has continued to improve since the previous inspection. Teachers and support staff work cohesively to create a purposeful learning environment. Staff's questioning skills are a particularly strong feature of the teaching. You have put a strong emphasis on staff training and development, which helps staff to continually reflect and improve their classroom practice. Pupils enjoy learning, which was typified in their comments: 'Teachers always make learning fun', and 'Staff always help you straight away and do not leave you waiting.' The teaching of reading has led to very positive outcomes. By the end of key stage 2 over the last two years, the school's progress measures were in the top 10% of all schools nationally. You recognise that there is more work to do in mathematics to make sure that pupils are consistently challenged, particularly the most able.

Good leadership and teaching ensure that children get off to a strong start in the early years. The Nursery has been developed well, and the number of children attending has risen. During the inspection, children were engrossed in their learning both inside the classroom and in the outdoor area. Several children in the Nursery proudly showed how they could write their name and form their letters accurately. In Reception, children independently chose large numbers to create their own number line.

You have responded well to the areas for improvements identified in the previous inspection. Work in pupils' books shows clear evidence of writing that has been developed within different subject areas, such as history and science. A consistent focus on the teaching of phonics and spelling has enabled pupils to apply their learned skills into their writing.

You are an inclusive and caring school. As result, support for vulnerable pupils is good. A high number of pupils join the school in key stage 1 or key stage 2. Some of these pupils have additional needs, and you quickly help them to settle. The federation's inclusion leader has put in place training for staff, so that additional support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective.

Safeguarding is effective.

All of the arrangements for keeping pupils safe are organised and thorough. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and are quick to raise concerns with the designated safeguarding leads. Leaders follow up concerns rigorously and involve

external agencies in the appropriate manner. The designated safeguarding leads also have good systems for monitoring the frequency of concerns, so that they are fully aware of when they might need to raise the level of support for a pupil. Regular training has ensured that staff have a good understanding of issues such as, the 'Prevent' duty, and child sexual exploitation.

Pupils are absolutely clear about how to keep themselves safe. Whole-school safety focus weeks, such as anti-bullying week and e-safety week, have helped to deepen pupils' understanding of important issues. They were keen to share that bullying is rare and, if it does occur, adults are quick to address it. Pupils feel that their peer mediators do a good job of helping to keep other pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- Pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics across the school are good, but could be improved further. At the end of key stage 2 for the last two years, the proportions of pupils attaining the expected standard have been above the national average. However, by the end of the three statutory assessment points of Reception, Year 2 and Year 6, the proportions of pupils attaining the higher standards for their age have been below the levels seen nationally. Some of the most able pupils are not given a consistent level of challenge. You are aware of this and identified it clearly in your school improvement plan.
- The head of school has worked with staff to make a number of positive changes to the teaching of mathematics. Training has helped to develop teachers' subject knowledge. There has been strong focus on improving pupils' arithmetic skills and, as a result, pupils demonstrate efficiency and confidence when recording their calculations. Teachers are also providing high-quality opportunities for pupils to learn practically in mathematics. Pupils enjoy using different objects to support their understanding of different mathematical concepts. Work in pupils' books shows that word problems and problem-solving skills are being developed well. However, opportunities to develop pupils' reasoning skills are not embedded consistently across the school.
- Pupil premium funding has a positive impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Your spending plan outlines a range of thoughtful strategies to support the individual needs of pupils. Several staff have been trained to support pupils' social and emotional development through interventions. This initiative is extremely successful and enables pupils to understand their emotions, so that they are in a far better place for academic learning. Other targeted interventions in reading, writing and mathematics are successful and help to accelerate disadvantaged pupils' progress. By the end of key stage 2 over the last two years, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils attaining the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was higher than that of other pupils nationally.
- Attendance rates have fluctuated in recent years. In 2016, overall pupil attendance rose and was broadly in line with the national average. However, in 2017 and so far this academic year, overall attendance has declined. You are proactive and thorough in your approaches to monitoring attendance. Pupils are motivated by the competitive class attendance awards. There are families that

you continue to work closely with in order to both support and challenge them to improve their child's attendance rates. Your recent work with the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller liaison officer has had a positive impact on attendance. You acknowledge that procedures for monitoring and following up attendance need continual review in order for the decline in attendance to be halted.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a sufficient level of challenge in mathematics for the most able pupils, particularly in relation to justifying their mathematical understanding through reasoning
- they continue to analyse absence rates and procedures, so that appropriate support can be put in place to improve levels of attendance.

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

Yours sincerely

Matt Meekin
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the head of school and other leaders. I also met with five governors. I spoke to pupils informally and formally. I made short visits to six lessons with you and looked at a range of pupils' books. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and considered 33 free-text responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also considered the responses from the online questionnaire completed by pupils and staff.

I scrutinised various documents including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan and the documents that you use to check the quality of teaching. You shared with me the most recent assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. We discussed the national test results and assessments undertaken by pupils in 2016 and 2017. I also looked at the school's published information on the website, as well as minutes of governing body meetings and information about attendance, behaviour and safety.