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Mrs Deborah Cottrell  
Headteacher  
St Lawrence CofE (Aided) Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Cottrell

### **Short inspection of St Lawrence CofE (Aided) Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 July 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 February 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Working closely together, you and your leadership team have taken the school from strength to strength since the previous inspection, due to your collective determination and ambition for your pupils and the whole school community. The whole leadership team shares your passion and vision for providing a careful balance of academic and social learning, supported by strong pastoral care. You weave your school's Christian values into all that you do, supporting pupils to recognise and celebrate their achievements as they demonstrate these values of love, courage, community, joy, respect, honesty, tolerance and justice.

Pupils are very happy at St Lawrence. They feel safe and they told me about the 'nice people and fun lessons'. They are adamant that 'nasty behaviour' does not happen, but they were able to tell me who they would talk to if they were worried about anything or anyone. They were sure that all adults at the school would support them and resolve any of their worries. They particularly like the family-feel of the school and the way that teachers know when they require help in lessons or when they need a little push to try something harder.

Parents are also very positive about the school. They praised its inclusive nature, and several commented on the way that you make every effort to adapt activities, including residentials, so that all pupils can take part. One parent wrote that the

special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) 'has been exceptionally accommodating of our child's needs and has gone over and above to ensure their inclusion fully in school life'. Many spoke of the high level of care and effective communication they received from all staff: teachers, teaching assistants and administrative staff alike. A typical comment was: 'St Lawrence has been an amazing experience for my son and us as parents. He is nurtured, encouraged, loved and cared for by his teachers and all the support staff he is in contact with.'

You have maintained and developed the strengths of the school that were identified in the previous inspection, and achieved the recommendations for improvement. Pupils show increased stamina in their writing, sustaining it well. Teachers routinely plan activities that match the needs of the pupils, providing work of an appropriate level of challenge and stretch that helps pupils to make strong progress. You have an accurate understanding of the school's current strengths and areas for development. You use this understanding to plan and push for continuous improvement. For example, you are currently working to develop middle leadership throughout the school so that it is all as strong as the best. You are also working to embed the improvements in pupils' mathematical understanding so that they strengthen their reasoning skills. While you have improved pupils' overall attendance, you are acutely aware of the impact that absence and lateness have on pupils' progress and have, rightly, identified these areas as another priority.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

School leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are kept meticulously. They have established a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school; staff are alert to possible signs of concern and act swiftly to address any worry.

Leaders know the community very well and have established strong and effective links that help them to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Case studies show that leaders are tenacious in following up any problems that come to light and communicate very effectively with external agencies to promote the needs of pupils and their families.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, I looked at leaders' work to improve pupils' attendance. Historically, this has been lower than the national averages, but it started to improve last academic year. I found that leaders' work has improved pupils' attendance further so that it is now in line with national averages. Leaders have established clear expectations and structured systems that address pupils' absence quickly. Improvements have been made but there are still too many pupils who are persistently absent or frequently late to school. Leaders are working hard to support these families and find practical solutions as well as trying to help pupils to catch up with the learning that they miss.
- I also looked at how well leaders have improved pupils' progress in writing and mathematics throughout the school. This work has been fruitful, and most pupils

make strong progress in these areas. In both subjects, the whole-school approach to planning and devising learning activities provides useful consistency. The leaders for English and mathematics have provided very effective training and coaching support for teachers and teaching assistants. They have also helped to assess pupils' work so that teachers understand what pupils know and can do, and what they need to do next to make strong progress.

- The focus on writing has improved pupils' fluency, vocabulary and accuracy. Leaders have transformed their approach to writing, using high-quality reading books to underpin each half-term's work. Learning activities have been very carefully planned and meet pupils' needs well. Pupils' work shows that they make rapid progress overall in writing, improving their ability to sustain their ideas and accuracy.
- Mathematics teaching has also developed well, and pupils have made strong progress with their mathematical skills. They were confident to explain their ideas and reasoning to me, but these thought processes are not routinely reflected in their work, even when teachers prompt them to do so. Leaders are aware that this aspect of their learning needs to be fully embedded across the school to help pupils to further extend their mathematical abilities.
- I explored how well leaders use the additional pupil premium funding. I found that it is used thoughtfully so that it successfully addresses the barriers to learning that pupils experience. Extra teaching assistants are trained well to provide good-quality language, phonics and number support; and this has helped pupils to catch up in these areas. The early morning reading intervention has also proved successful. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils really well, making sure that they anticipate and address potential issues as early as possible. The strong relationships that they have developed with families helps this work to be effective, and many parents commented on the open and 'excellent communication' with staff throughout the school.
- I also considered how well governors are fulfilling their statutory duties and are holding leaders to account. Governors are knowledgeable and use a range of skills to hold leaders to account. They have developed a clear committee structure that allows them to interrogate school information closely, including pupils' performance data. They have responded well to their own audit of their work and have increased their presence so that parents know who they are. Their regular visits to the school allow them to consider the experience of pupils on a day-to-day basis. Consequently, they have a secure understanding of the work of leaders and hold them to account well.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- strengthen middle leadership across the school so that it is consistently effective
- strengthen pupils' mathematical reasoning skills
- reduce persistent absence and lateness.

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

Yours sincerely

Lucy English  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and your deputy, other members of school staff, and members of the governing body. I also had a telephone conversation with the area improvement adviser from the local authority. Together, you and I planned the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. With you and your deputy, I visited all the classes in the school to observe pupils' learning, speak with pupils and look at their books. I spoke with pupils at lunchtime and took into account 29 responses to the online pupil survey. I met parents at the start of the school day and considered 52 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 31 written contributions by parents. I spoke with staff during the day and took account of 20 responses to the online staff questionnaire. I also examined a sample of pupils' work. I looked at a range of documentation, including information about the work of governors, safeguarding, attendance and behaviour. Additionally, I scrutinised and discussed the school's tracking of pupils' progress and attainment, and the school's self-evaluation and development plans.