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Mrs Bal Kang
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Kang

Short inspection of William Austin Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 4 December 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 January 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You and the other leaders, most of whom have worked at the school for a very long time, are deeply committed to the school and are ambitious for it. The leadership team is determined that the school will continue to improve so that it provides the very best possible education for pupils.

You have created a friendly, welcoming and happy school. Pupils behave very well in their classrooms and clearly enjoy coming to school. William Austin Infant School provides pupils with a good start to their educational careers. You ensure that diversity is valued in your school and that pupils learn about and respect each other's beliefs. For example, on the day that the inspection took place, pupils enjoyed decorating the school's Christmas tree, displayed proudly in the hall. At other times, pupils learn about other religious festivals, such as Eid and Diwali. You have been successful in gaining the trust of parents and carers so that all pupils take part in such activities, regardless of their family's beliefs.

Leaders and governors have focused well on the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Pupils are now provided with more challenge. The effectiveness of this is evident in the above average proportion of pupils that attained greater depth at the end of key stage 1 in 2018. The school's work to improve the attainment in phonics is also clear. Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check have risen steadily since the previous inspection and were above the national averages for the first time in 2018.

You and the other leaders believe that the school's overall effectiveness is outstanding. In order to check whether this is likely to be the case, I looked at whether pupils make the substantial and sustained progress indicative of outstanding outcomes rather than strong progress seen when outcomes are good. I did not find evidence that this is the case.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school has a strong system in place for ensuring that only suitable people are employed to work with children. Checks are carried out stringently and staff show good awareness of current guidance. The school's single central record of pre-appointment checks meets statutory requirements.

The safeguarding leadership team members have an excellent understanding of their roles. Systems for reporting, recording and dealing with child protection concerns are thorough and well established. There is clear evidence that action is taken in a timely fashion to protect children, where necessary. Safeguarding leaders have particularly strong knowledge and understanding of the 'Prevent' duty. You have ensured that staff are well trained in this area and have taken prompt and appropriate action, where necessary.

Inspection findings

- I followed a number of key lines of enquiry in order to judge whether the school remains good. First, I looked at the progress of boys and girls. I chose to look at this because assessment information for 2018 indicates that boys attain less well than girls in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. Although boys' attainment is similar to the national benchmark, the gap between girls' and boys' attainment is often much wider than the national average. This is also the case with the phonics screening check in Year 1.
- Leaders told me that some groups of boys are much less independent than girls when they first join the school. The school has found that these boys tend to wait for an adult to do things for them rather than doing things for themselves. Leaders feel that this is a major factor affecting the weaker attainment of boys compared with girls. Leaders agreed that this is a recurring issue and not a passing one, specific to a single group of children.
- Leaders are fully aware of the differences in attainment between boys and girls. I looked closely at the school's assessment information showing the progress made over the last academic year by current pupils and those who have most recently left the school. This information shows that boys are not making enough progress to diminish the differences between their attainment and the girls' attainment.
- A range of actions have been taken to improve outcomes for boys and you told me that these are making a difference. For example, teachers have reviewed the texts that they use during lessons and now choose more 'boy friendly' books and stories. Teachers also select themes and topics, such as pirates and superheroes,

which they have found to be more appealing to boys. During my visits to classrooms, I saw boys working well and trying hard. I saw examples of high-quality work in boys' exercise books.

- The second area I checked was the quality of the early years provision. I chose this because 'extending the outdoor learning opportunities for children in Reception' was an area for improvement from the previous inspection.
- Leaders have made a number of changes to the outdoor area. For example, a gazebo and sandpit have been constructed, and a reading area has been developed. Leaders told me about further plans to improve the area and works that are due to take place during the Easter holiday. However, at this point, the early years outdoor area remains underdeveloped. It does not yet provide children with the highly stimulating environment that leaders are working towards.
- The majority of children join the school with skills and abilities below those that are typical of their age, particularly around language and communication. Most children speak English as an additional language and many are at an early stage of learning to speak English when they join the school. Children make strong progress during their time in the Reception Year and most have caught up by the time they are ready to move on to Year 1. The proportion of children that attain a good level of development in Reception has been similar to the national average for the last four years.
- The final area that I explored was the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). I chose to look at this area because the school has a very high proportion of pupils with SEND compared with other schools nationally. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care (EHCP) plan is lower than that typically found nationally. Around a fifth of pupils with SEND reached the national benchmarks in reading and writing in 2018, and just under half in mathematics.
- Leaders know pupils with SEND well. They check on their progress regularly and ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to meet their individual needs. Leaders described convincingly how targets are set for pupils with SEND that are both achievable and aspirational. On the whole, pupils meet their targets because they have been well chosen. The school's assessment information shows that, overall, pupils with SEND make good progress from their individual starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they continue to develop:

- the quality of the early years provision, particularly the use of the outdoor area
- the quality of teaching, so that a greater proportion of pupils make substantial and sustained progress from their individual starting points in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Wendy Varney
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other leaders, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I observed teaching and learning, jointly with you or the deputy headteacher, in the early years classes and in two classes in key stage 1. I spoke with pupils during my visits to these classrooms. I took into account the 12 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 12 free-text comments that were received. I also took note of the 25 responses to the staff survey. I looked at a sample of pupils' work while visiting their classrooms and listened to them read their work and printed resources to me. I looked at a range of school documents, including the single central record of pre-appointment checks.