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Mrs Samantha Ray
Executive Headteacher
St Luke's CofE (C) Primary School
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Dear Mrs Ray

Short inspection of St Luke's CofE (C) Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 March 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 January 2013.

This school continues to be good.

You have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Ably supported by your recently appointed assistant headteachers and all staff and governors, you have worked with pupils and parents to build upon the strengths of the school and address areas for development.

St Luke's is a happy school. Staff enjoy teaching the pupils, parents value the work of staff and pupils are proud of their school. This is the result of your high expectations and the positive ethos that you have developed in the school over time.

Everyone feels part of the school community. This is an inclusive and nurturing school which welcomes pupils from a range of backgrounds. As pupils told me, differences are accepted, bullying is extremely rare and staff would deal with any unkindness quickly and effectively, if it occurred.

Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They listen carefully to staff and other pupils in lessons and they are usually interested and excited by the work that they do. During social times, pupils are sensible and they play with enthusiasm and consideration during breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

All parents who made their views known during the inspection would recommend the school to other parents and they believe that communication is of a very high

quality. For example, many parents commented upon how they can access the class blog to see what their child has been doing in school, help their learning at home and communicate with the class teacher. The school's website also contains all the required information in a user-friendly way. Parents were full of praise for the quality of teaching and the progress that their children make in the school.

Children make rapid progress in the early years setting and they are very well prepared for Year 1. Outcomes in the phonics screening checks have improved over time and are now similar to the national average. The school has achieved some very positive results in the end-of-key-stage tests and assessments since the last inspection. For example, pupils at the end of key stage 2 made faster progress than can be found nationally in writing and mathematics in 2016. Over time, most pupils have consistently reached the expected standard in reading by the end of key stage 1.

However, in 2016, middle-ability pupils and disadvantaged pupils did not make fast enough progress in reading by the end of key stage 2 and the most able pupils did not achieve the highest standards by the end of key stage 1. Standards in writing were also lower than those achieved by pupils in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 in 2016.

Leaders are aware of these relative weaknesses and they have taken effective action to address them. Current pupils are making improved progress; a love of reading is being developed; strengths in mathematics are being built upon and action is being taken to improve the quality of writing further. However, standards in writing do not yet match those found in reading and mathematics in key stage 1 and the most able pupils are not consistently challenged to make rapid progress in all areas of the school. Although the progress of disadvantaged pupils now matches that of other pupils in the school, it is not fast enough to quickly diminish the differences between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally. Leaders are aware that further action is required to address these areas for development.

You have taken effective action to address the areas for development identified at the time of the last inspection. Pupils have a clear understanding of their targets and know what to do to improve their work. They write at length in a number of subjects using different techniques and a range of effective strategies are used to increase pupils' confidence and accuracy in spelling. Although not leading to consistently rapid progress, the most able are frequently challenged to think deeply about topics and apply their learning to different situations.

You have also worked closely with parents to improve attendance. You evaluate the impact of initiatives and strategies precisely and you use assessment information effectively to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress. However, the assessment system that you currently use does not easily show the progress made by different prior attaining groups or those who join the school at times other than the usual starting dates.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities with regard to keeping pupils safe. They have received up-to-date training and regular updates and policies and procedures used throughout the school are robust. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare.

Referrals are made promptly and outside agencies are used appropriately. Record-keeping is thorough and careful checks are made on visitors and staff. The site is secure and pupils are taught to stay safe in a range of situations. For example, they learn about online safety, road safety and 'stranger danger' and have targeted updates around specific events such as bonfire night.

As a result of a strong safeguarding culture, all pupils, staff and parents who made their views known during the inspection indicated that pupils feel safe as they are taught to stay safe in an effective way.

Inspection findings

- The school is well led and managed. Leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have taken effective action to build upon the school's strengths and address the areas for development.
- Leaders and staff have used a range of strategies to improve attendance. Regular and improved attendance is rewarded and the school's parent and pupil support worker has engaged well with families to improve attendance. As a result, attendance is now above last year's national average and the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils is higher than other pupils in the school. However, the attendance of boys is still lower than that of girls.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. As a result of good teaching and effective support, this group of pupils make good progress from their starting points in the school.
- Children make a very good start to their schooling in the early years setting. This part of the school is very well led, the curriculum is engaging, teaching is strong and children make rapid progress in this challenging but caring environment. As a result, a higher proportion of children reach a good level of development than can be found nationally.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and there is some teaching of a very high quality in the school. Teachers plan to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities and take opportunities to help pupils improve their spelling, develop their handwriting and write at length. Pupils are aware of their targets and are so keen to respond to comments to improve their work that most come to school early to do this during 'Pit Stop' sessions.
- Pupils are encouraged to read a range of appropriate texts and they enjoy reading for pleasure and to access information. The school and class libraries are

used well and pupils enjoy borrowing books from their teachers. As a result of this active promotion of the love of reading, all groups of pupils currently in the school are making improved progress.

- Outcomes in mathematics were strong in 2016 and pupils achieved well in writing by the end of key stage 2. However, attainment in writing was not good enough in key stage 1 last year. Leaders are beginning to take effective action to address this. There is a strong focus on improving handwriting and spelling, interventions are in place and progress is improving. 'Experiential weeks' have a positive impact on improving writing but further action is required to ensure that progress is rapid and sustained.
- The most able pupils did not make fast enough progress in the school in 2016. There is evidence of greater challenge in the work that current pupils are set, additional support is in place and they are making improved progress. However, all staff do not consistently plan to deepen understanding or accelerate the progress of the most able pupils.
- Pupil premium funding has been used effectively over time. The progress of disadvantaged pupils matches that of other pupils in the school and their attainment is getting closer to that of other pupils nationally. However, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in the school is not rapid enough to quickly diminish the difference between their attainment and the attainment of other pupils nationally.
- Staff and leaders track the progress of individuals and certain groups effectively. However, the current system does not clearly show the progress made by pupils with low, middle and high prior attainment and it does not easily show the progress made by groups of pupils who join the school at times other than the usual starting dates. This means that leaders cannot fully analyse the progress of these groups of pupils in order to inform further action.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the current system of tracking progress is developed so that it clearly shows the progress made by different prior-attaining groups and pupils who are new to the school
- the most able pupils are consistently challenged to reach the highest standards in all subjects
- teaching and interventions to improve the quality of writing lead to higher standards, particularly in key stage 1
- disadvantaged pupils make accelerated progress in order to diminish the differences between their attainment and the attainment of other pupils nationally.

I am copying this letter to the co-chairs of the governing body, the director of education for the diocese of Lichfield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, school leaders, staff and the co-chairs of the governing body. I also spoke to pupils informally and contacted a representative of the local authority by telephone. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and considered 28 responses and 14 free-text responses to Parent View. I also looked at 25 responses to the staff questionnaire and 25 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan, information about managing teachers' performance and staff training records. Minutes of meetings of the governing body and information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety were also analysed. I also looked at published information on the school's website.