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Ms Melanie Michael
Headteacher
St Luke's CofE Primary School
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Dear Ms Michael

Short inspection of St Luke's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 May 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 April 2012.

This school continues to be good

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There is a friendly welcome for all who arrive. Your tenacity, drive and enthusiasm is infectious and shines throughout the school. Your leadership team and staff are all committed to the positive changes brought about since your appointment, which are leading to stronger outcomes for pupils. It is clear that you are striving to achieve 'excellence through belief, inclusion and resilience'.

Following the last inspection, you were given a number of areas to improve. These have been tackled effectively. There is a strong culture of professional dialogue, support and challenge between staff. You and your deputy headteacher have been successful in establishing strong links with other schools. Staff appreciate the opportunities for professional development and are benefiting from the sharing of good practice and moderation with other teachers. This is particularly helpful for those new to teaching. You are reflective in your practice and proactive in making changes when necessary. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving and pupils are making progress.

Parents told me how much they appreciate what you and your staff do for their children. The vast majority of parents spoken to during the inspection, and those who accessed Parent View online, commented very positively about the strong developments between school, home and the local community. The phrase 'It's like a family' was heard several times. Parents of pupils who receive additional support

for special educational needs and/or disabilities speak highly of the care and support their children receive in school and that their family receives. Parents also commented positively on the calm working atmosphere within school and the variety of clubs, visits and activities available for the pupils. The residential visit to Todmorden is just one example of the many enrichments available to pupils.

Pupils are polite, confident and proud of their own achievements, and the achievements of others. The older pupils take their responsibilities seriously in their roles as mentors, eco-warriors, e-cadets and councillors. Pupils spoken to said that there is very little inappropriate behaviour and that if there is any, it is dealt with swiftly.

Year 6 pupils speak confidently about their transition to secondary school. They said that they feel well prepared and are looking forward to it and that they will 'conquer any fears and make new friends'. This is due to the confidence you have instilled in the pupils and the positive impact of your work to promote their self-esteem.

Safeguarding is effective

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Processes and procedures are rigorous and the safety and care of the pupils is at the centre of all you do. Staff receive regular updates from you and the safeguarding team. Staff commented that they feel valued and listened to about any concerns they may have.

Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that they know who to go to if they have any worries. They are confident their worries will be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly. Records are of a high quality. You know your families well and work effectively with outside agencies to ensure that the most vulnerable families and pupils are safe.

Inspection findings

- Since the start of the year, you have been relentless in your drive to improve punctuality and attendance, particularly for the disadvantaged pupils. You and your staff are very visible at the start and end of each day, and the number of late arrivals has fallen from an average of 40 each week to six. There are a small number of pupils whose complex needs have resulted in them having considerable absences due to health-related issues. This is acknowledged and the pupils and their families work closely with your parent-support staff.
- You have introduced a number of imaginative incentives that are having a positive impact on improving attendance. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has increased, and this is having a direct impact on improved progress and attainment for pupils. You work closely with the local attendance officer and support the most vulnerable families. Leaders robustly follow up when pupils are absent and are beginning to hold parents to account. You are raising expectations and, as a result, pupils are making steady progress.

- New appointments to the leadership team in early years have led to a positive change in children's attitudes towards learning. Staff work closely with their key stage 1 colleagues to ensure that children are ready for Year 1.
- Leaders in the early years set high expectations and lead by example. Adults use questions effectively to encourage, develop and extend children's ideas throughout the day. Activities are developed to ignite the imagination of the children and capture their interests. The daily focused teaching sessions allow for early identification of children who may need extra support with their learning. Misconceptions are quickly addressed by the adults, working with small groups or individual children. Challenging activities allow for the opportunity for adults to assess the children's application of skills independently. Parents are highly involved in gathering evidence to show their own children's achievements at home. This adds quality and depth to the teacher's judgements. Leaders are successfully embedding effective practice. The number of children who reach a good level of development by the end of Reception is continuing to improve and is almost in line with the number of children who reach a good level of development nationally.
- Changes to the organisation and delivery of the phonics teaching sessions has brought about sustained improvements. The number of pupils who reach the expected standard in the phonics check at the end of Year 1 is now almost in line with those of other pupils nationally. The teaching of letters and sounds is consistent and systematic across Reception and Year 1. Pupils who need additional support access high-quality interventions, delivered by very skilled support staff. As a result, pupils make accelerated progress. Observations, and written work, seen during the inspection, showed that the pupils are using and applying their phonic skills effectively across a range of subjects. Workshops for parents have been successful in encouraging them to support their children at home, raising the aspirations and expectations of pupils and their parents.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have carried out an audit across school looking closely at the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This was an area for improvement from the last inspection. You and your leaders correctly identified where improvements were needed. Teachers work closely with the special educational needs coordinator and support staff to ensure that the right support is provided for pupils. Records are accurate and focus on pupils' specific areas of need. You and your leaders have developed strong links with a local school for pupils who have specific educational needs. This allows your staff to attend high-quality training and share good practice. You have a close working relationship with parents and carers and support them with a range of issues. This benefits the pupils and ensures that they make good progress.
- You have accurately identified the barriers to learning for the disadvantaged pupils. Leaders ensure that appropriate support is in place for vulnerable pupils and their families. Governors from the local community are proactive and a positive presence within school and the community. You and your staff have worked tirelessly to change the culture by raising aspirations and expectations. Parents are beginning to understand the importance of attending school every day. Pupils understand what they need to do to improve their learning. They take

pride in their work and have aspirations to succeed. Following a session on persuasive writing about animals and zoos, a pupil said that she wants to be a vet when she is older so that she can look after the animals that live in zoos. The school's own assessment information shows that the difference in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others is diminishing. There has been an increase in the number of pupils making good progress from their starting points. More pupils are reaching the standard expected nationally by the end of key stage 2. As a result, an increased number of pupils are ready to access the curriculum as they move on to secondary school. You acknowledge that this needs to improve as you embed the effective practice already begun.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to tackle the poor attendance of a number of disadvantaged pupils, using all the avenues available, to ensure that with good attendance they will continue to make progress towards the standards expected
- they further embed the effective practice already begun to diminish the difference in attainment for the disadvantaged pupils by the end of key stage 2 so that the number of pupils achieving the expected standard, is in line with other pupils nationally.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Stringer
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, other senior leaders and staff responsible for safeguarding. I also met with three staff new to teaching. I spoke to a representative of the local authority and met with eight members of the governing body including the chair of governors. I conducted a learning walk with you and your deputy headteacher, and visited classes where I had the opportunity to speak to pupils and see their work and hear them read. I met with a group of older pupils during the day, spoke with a number of parents at the school gates and took account of five free-text comments. There were 53 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents. I scrutinised a range of documentation including pupils' assessment information, self-evaluation, school improvement planning, the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices.