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Mrs Jane Paterson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Paterson

Short inspection of Launton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You were appointed to the headship at the start of the academic year, after a period of time at the school as a successful deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). You have started a sensible process of moving the school forward, building on its many strengths. You are also taking decisive action to deal with those areas which remain in need of further improvement. The staff team wholeheartedly support these initiatives and cooperate well with you and each other to raise standards higher.

You are ably supported by a stable and secure board of governors. Governors have a very clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They hold you to account for the performance of the school, but also support you well when necessary. Together, you have addressed successfully some weaknesses in previous practice. For example, the school's finances are now based on sound and reliable information, which enables you to make effective and creative use of the resources at your disposal. You work well with the Friends of Launton School who, through their fundraising efforts, contribute to the overall health of the budget. The vast majority of the community is working collaboratively, for example on the development of the rear field, to aid pupils' physical well-being and to increase opportunities for them to participate in sports and games.

You support the staff team well, while setting high expectations and holding them to account for the performance of the pupils in their classes. You ensure that they are

well trained for their roles, notably finding professional learning opportunities that increase individuals' own knowledge, skills and understanding, but which also lead to improvements in the quality of the pupils' education. Staff enjoy working at the school and operate efficiently as a flexible team.

Teaching is purposeful in all classes. It is based on a firm set of values and principles that you communicate clearly to your staff. You are determined that pupils will benefit from a wide-ranging curriculum and showed me samples of the positive outcomes of pupils' work in 'topic', design and technology, and art. You are committed to building on the strong start children make in the early years. Pupils make good progress across the school. However, the most able do not fully reach their potential because tasks are not sufficiently challenging for them. Pupils do well in the phonics check in Year 1, and the vast majority apply the skills learned there in their reading higher up the school. Similarly, there is strong support for the development of children's writing, from early mark-making to the formation of proper sentences by the end of Reception. This sets up pupils for good-quality writing in key stage 2. Their 'special' writing books show this clearly. Examples of their writing are drawn from across the curriculum and, as such, also show the school's strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders' work to keep pupils safe is effective. All statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met. You ensure that all staff have been trained to exercise their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding. You have a plan in place to update safeguarding training in the autumn, following the release of the updated document 'Keeping children safe in education' (2018).

Security arrangements at the front of the premises are exemplary, especially given the close proximity of the school to the village's main road. Leaders maintain good levels of supervision on the rear field when the weather permits its safe use. This means that pupils can play together happily. You are taking the opportunity to develop the outside spaces at the school. This is so that pupils can benefit from even more resources to help them become active, stay fit or participate in more sports and games. Pupils have achieved sporting successes thanks, in part, to the judicious use of the primary physical education and sports premium.

The vast majority of pupils say that they feel safe in school. A few parents and carers believe that their children remain subject to bullying despite the extensive work that the school undertakes to prevent it happening. Pupils receive very clear messages about bullying and what to do should it happen. They also know what to do if they are uncomfortable or worried about something someone has done or said to them. You agreed that there is still more work to be done to help a minority of parents understand the school's approach to dealing with bullying. This is also the case for some parents' understanding of the reasons why you ask some teachers to teach other classes from time to time.

The school's work to keep pupils' safe is supported by teachers' effective classroom management and their skilful handling of the very rare examples of challenging behaviour. Pupils' attendance is good overall. You have not needed to exclude any pupils in your time as headteacher. Their conduct around the school is extremely good. They are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors.

Inspection findings

- This inspection focused on checking that teaching is leading to consistently good outcomes over time, and seeing how well the most able pupils are doing. I also checked that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. In addition, the inspection investigated why the number of pupils on roll fluctuates from year to year, and examined what contributes to the strong start children make in the early years.
- Teaching is increasingly strong across the school. Teachers take pride in their work and only want the best for their children. They take care to ensure that pupils have access to a wide and enriching curriculum. For example, all pupils in key stage 2 are currently studying, as their topic, the ancient Greeks, their beliefs, civilisation and culture. Pupils also benefit from good-quality physical education, supported by the North Oxfordshire Sports Partnership and a specialist teaching assistant. All of this is set in the context of the school's Church of England foundation, so that pupils participate in collective acts of worship that enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. During the inspection, they sang confidently and well in assembly.
- Teachers take time to compare pupils' work with others, so that they know that the right things are being taught at the correct level. This works well for the majority of pupils. However, some of the most able pupils finished work very quickly in the lessons visited, showing that it was too easy for them. This reflects some of the results shown in published historical information about the school. These pupils are not receiving hard enough work or activities that cause them to think more deeply, write at greater depth or stretch their skills, reasoning and understanding. Teachers currently only provide work to extend such pupils' learning when they recognise that the initial task has been completed.
- In the early years, planning, effective relationships with parents and an enabling and stimulating learning environment ensure that all children make a positive start to their time in school. Those that enter the school with lower than average starting points are helped to catch up quickly.
- Adults work collaboratively in the early years to create a culture where every second counts. Even when pupils are tidying up, adults ask them questions which support the development of their language or their application of number skills in real-life settings. In one case, children were asked to estimate how much time they needed to complete a task. They provided thoughtful and realistic answers.
- Over time, all children are supported individually so that by the end of Reception, a very large majority attain consistently a good level of development. This means that they are ready to start Year 1.

- Leaders monitor carefully each pupil's progress. They know them all, their strengths and their needs very well. Leaders work increasingly closely with parents so that the community around the school is developing professionally but with real warmth. Most parents, for example, felt that the 'mix it up' day was beneficial to the pupils, as it was a fresh way to approach anti-bullying and live out the school's inclusive mission.
- For many parents, Launton has become the first-choice school and they travel some distance so that their children can be enrolled there. This means that the school's roll is growing steadily. For the past three years, the school has taken more pupils than were catered for in the local authority's planning. Leaders cope well with this, but rightly argue that they now need more resources.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils are provided with learning activities that stretch and challenge them to work to the fullness of their potential.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Hughes
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I conducted two learning walks with the headteacher and visited every class. I held meetings with the headteacher, a group of staff, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and the school's current action plan. I spoke with many pupils informally, looked at a sample of pupils' work from across the curriculum and took into account six responses to Ofsted's confidential pupil survey and the school's own surveys of pupils' satisfaction with their time in school. I considered 11 responses to Ofsted's confidential staff survey. I reviewed four emails sent in to the school from parents, spoke with six parents on the playground and took into account 65 responses to Parent View and 45 free-text parental comments provided through this survey tool. I looked at documents relating to the work of governors and aspects of safeguarding.