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Mrs Lilian Taylor-Bell
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Dear Mrs Taylor-Bell

Short inspection of Leyland St James Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 April 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You lead a happy, friendly and very inclusive school where you teach pupils to be independent and resilient learners. You rightly recognise that every pupil in your school is unique and that all deserve the best education. As a result of your inspirational and determined leadership, staff provide a nurturing and engaging environment which develops pupils' confidence and well-being.

You and your deputy headteacher lead an enthusiastic team of staff who are keen to do their best for every pupil. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to make sure that no learning time is lost. Leaders have ensured that staff training has improved teaching. Staff value opportunities to work together and with other settings to improve their practice. In mathematics, teachers have worked in partnership with an outstanding local school to develop teaching. As a result of improvements to teaching in mathematics, standards have risen.

Governors provide the right balance of support and challenge for leaders. They are frequent visitors and know the school very well. Governors keep their professional skills up to date and use these to keep a close watch on pupils' progress. As a result of their regular monitoring, governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The information you shared with me indicates that pupils' attendance has improved as a result of the actions that leaders have taken.

Pupils are very proud of their school. They enjoy lessons and their attendance is good. You teach pupils to be tolerant of others and to value and respect each other's differences. As a result, pupils said that bullying doesn't happen and that, in lessons, learning is not interrupted by misbehaviour. Pupils enjoy learning about other religions. Pupils from Year 3 spoke with enthusiasm about visiting a mosque. During my visit, I saw that pupils are very polite and well mannered. They move calmly around school and behave exceptionally well in lessons, working with concentration and cooperation.

You have responded well to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The quality of teaching has been strengthened and, as a result, pupils' outcomes across the school have improved. In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 6 was in line with national averages. You have improved teaching by ensuring that teachers challenge pupils more, especially the most able in reading and writing.

In mathematics, standards have also risen. This is because you have taken the right steps to improve how mathematics is taught across the school. Leaders have identified that in some classes the most-able pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable in mathematics, and you are taking appropriate steps to improve this.

You were also asked to improve the role of middle leaders. You have provided middle leaders with opportunities to develop their skills by attending training and working with other schools. As a result, they have kept their skills up to date and lead their areas of responsibility with enthusiasm. Middle leaders make regular checks on pupils' learning in different subject areas. They ensure that the curriculum is interesting. We agreed that there is still work to do to ensure that middle leaders improve teaching and learning across all areas of the curriculum.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have made sure safeguarding arrangements are thorough, fit for purpose and of high quality. They carry out statutory checks on the suitability of staff to work with children. Leaders have taken effective action to ensure that the school is a safe and secure place in which children can learn. Governors and leaders have made sure that the appropriate monitoring and filtering arrangements are in place for the school's internet connection. Staff teach pupils about how to keep themselves safe, including when online, and with road and firework safety. Parents, pupils and staff strongly agree that pupils are safe.

Through regular training, staff and governors have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. You lead a very useful weekly safeguarding briefing for staff. As a result, they are vigilant about the potential risks that pupils may face. Records relating to pupils' welfare are appropriate and well kept. Leaders work closely with parents and other professionals to make sure that pupils are safe.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, the first of which was how well the school supports pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. I found that the school provides very effective and nurturing support and teaching for this group of pupils. Staff know these pupils well and have high expectations of what they can achieve. Skilled leaders and teachers identify pupils' barriers to learning very carefully. You have made sure that pupils receive exactly the right support. For example, some pupils visit the school's nurture unit Ark, where they develop their social and emotional skills in a calm and welcoming environment. During my visit, a small group of pupils were greatly enjoying a visit from Ted, a therapy dog. Staff work closely with other professionals to make sure that these pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- For my second key line of enquiry, I reviewed the progress of pupils in mathematics, which has been lower than reading and writing. Staff have received training and you have purchased new resources to support pupils' learning. Teachers provide pupils with more regular opportunities for reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics. The impact of the changes that you have made can be seen in pupils' improved progress. In 2017, at the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was above the national average.
- I also looked at how effectively the school uses additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. You and your governors ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent wisely to support pupils' academic progress and well-being. The school's tracking system shows that these pupils make good progress from their varied starting points. Staff give the most able disadvantaged pupils additional support to make sure that they make the gains that they should in their learning.
- My final focus for the inspection related to whether pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. I found that you have carefully planned a curriculum which develops pupils' well-being, independence and resilience. In the Reception Year and Key Stage 1, the wonderful outdoor learning area gives children and pupils many opportunities to climb, explore and investigate. In lessons, pupils happily discuss their learning and are not afraid to have a go, especially when tackling tricky work. As one Year 6 pupil told me, one of the school values is endurance, and so they do not give up when challenged. Those pupils who I spoke to said the learning across the curriculum is fun and challenging. Visits enhance pupils' learning experiences. For example, Year 5 pupils relished the opportunity to learn thatching, foraging and archery during a history visit to an Anglo Saxon village. As a result of the curriculum that you have planned, pupils develop their skills and knowledge across different areas of the curriculum. They are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- During the inspection, I found that the Forest School area enhances learning across the school as part of the school's curriculum. During my visit, children from the Reception Year were manoeuvring their way through tall trees and bushes as they collected sticks to make sculptures. Another group of children were having great fun using clay and natural materials to make models. They sat

sensibly and listened attentively as teachers gave them instructions about how to be safe in the exciting outdoor environment. Through experiences such as den-making, pupils across the school, including those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, develop their physical, social and personal skills.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in mathematics, a higher proportion of pupils achieve greater depth
- the roles of middle leaders are further enhanced so that they have a greater impact on teaching and learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Stevens
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher. I also met with three governors, including the chair of governors. I met with eight pupils from key stage 2. I visited classes in each key stage with you, where I observed teaching and learning and spoke with pupils. I looked at pupils' work in a range of subject areas. I also heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.

I took account of responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including free-text responses. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, information about pupils' attainment and progress, and teachers' performance management monitoring. I also evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep pupils safe, safeguarding checks and attendance information. I undertook a review of the school's website.