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30 October 2018

Mrs Sarah Coleman
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Coleman

Short inspection of Lindale CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 October 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 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 are an inspirational leader who is taking the school from strength to strength. You are supported and challenged by knowledgeable and committed governors. They have recognised the benefits to improving the quality of education that is on offer by supporting you to become the executive headteacher of another school. Governors see the opportunities for staff sharing their expertise with another school as an essential step in retaining and developing them.

You have created a caring and nurturing ethos that places pupils at the heart of the school. All the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that pupils feel safe and are well looked after. Staff are welcoming and warm in their attitudes towards pupils. Relationships within the school are exemplary. There is a strong sense of collegiality which enables staff to work together well to bring about positive improvements. You have succeeded in developing an engaging curriculum that captures pupils' imagination. Pupils brim with enthusiasm when talking about their work.

Governors understand the impact of actions taken to improve the school and how this affects pupils' outcomes. Their close involvement with the school actively promotes pupils' good progress and development to become well-rounded young people.

Leaders have ensured that the areas for improvement from the last inspection have been addressed effectively. You have developed the outdoor area so that this is now a strength of the school's provision which enhances pupils' social development. You have also revised the curriculum to ensure that pupils are challenged to achieve higher standards. This is clearly evident in key stage 2, where pupils demonstrate substantial progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of the key stage. The progress of pupils in writing in the early years and key stage 1 is good and sometimes better. However, some errors in pupils' use of punctuation persist over time and the quality of pupils' handwriting is variable. This inspection also found that, in key stage 2, pupils' fieldwork skills in geography are not developed in enough depth, despite the opportunities that they have for outdoor learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

All staff have received updated training on safeguarding so that their knowledge is up to date. Leaders, governors and staff are clear about the local risks to pupils. All staff are vigilant and record any concerns in detail. As the safeguarding leader, you are tenacious in ensuring that any concerns are chased up with relevant partner agencies to ensure positive outcomes for pupils. Leaders access early help for parents who require support.

Pupils say that they feel safe because of the caring staff. Pupils feel that they can approach staff with any concerns. They know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when online.

Inspection findings

- As part of this inspection, we looked at a number of key lines of enquiry. The first was to see how consistently the teaching of phonics skills enables pupils to read. The English leader is knowledgeable about the school and passionate about her role. She has implemented improvements so that pupils in key stage 1 use phonics strategies successfully to read appropriate texts. Where they experience difficulty, this is swiftly addressed through targeted support. There is a systematic approach to developing pupils' vocabulary and spelling to enable them to read with increasing fluency. Leaders have also put effective strategies in place to support pupils when reading at home. The early years leader has focused on developing children's vocabulary and use of phonics skills so that children are well prepared for Year 1. Pupils in key stage 1 read confidently. They are adept at recognising and spelling out words. They make good progress in their phonics work. This has also ensured that pupils understand basic skills in reading. These form the foundations for pupils' future learning. Pupils make good progress in reading to achieve high standards at the end of both key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- During the inspection, we also looked at how effectively leaders promote children's progress in writing from when they start in the early years to the end of key stage 1. Teachers make accurate assessments of pupils on entry to the Reception Year. These show that pupils generally start school with skills below those typical for their age in writing. However, the small number of pupils in each class means that this varies from year to year. Children develop a solid base of skills in the early years. A review of their writing shows that they make good progress. Pupils in key stage 1 continue to make good, and sometimes better, progress. Pupils' vocabulary has improved, which helps

them to write in detail using increasingly complex sentences to add interest. However, handwriting in key stage 1 is variable and does not represent the good quality of content in pupils' written work. Pupils' work also shows that some common errors persist over time, particularly in the use of punctuation.

- Finally, we looked at how effectively teachers develop pupils' skills and knowledge in geography and history in key stage 2. Leaders' work to revise the curriculum has led to teachers planning their topics to respond to pupils' interests. Pupils have opportunities to study topics such as the Egyptians and ancient Greece, which combine elements of geography and historical skills. They interrogate different sources of information. For example, in upper key stage 2, pupils investigate the meaning of Egyptian hieroglyphics depicting the ceremony of the weighing of the heart. Imaginative tasks such as designing their own sarcophagus lead to high levels of engagement in their work. Pupils' work shows that they make good progress in their history and geography work. However, despite having opportunities to learn in the outside environment, pupils' fieldwork skills are not developed in enough depth in key stage 2. Pupils can recall the activities that they have taken part in but cannot say how these have improved their learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- handwriting improves and common errors in punctuation are addressed more effectively in key stage 1 so that they do not persist over time
- pupils' geography fieldwork skills are developed in more depth in key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Bentham
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with leaders and governors to discuss safeguarding and aspects of the school's leadership and management. I visited classes with the headteacher and spoke to pupils informally about their work during lessons. I heard pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 read. I reviewed safeguarding documentation, which included the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff. I spoke with Year 6 and Year 5 pupils about safeguarding, behaviour and different aspects of their geography and history work. I conducted a scrutiny of key stage 1 pupils' written work. I analysed leaders' records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, the school's evaluation of its strengths and

weaknesses and the school development plan. I took into account 18 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and four responses to the staff survey.