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Mr Peter Thorne
Headteacher
Long Lane Primary School
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Dear Mr Thorne

Short inspection of Long Lane Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 February 2019, 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 March 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Through a series of staff changes and budgetary challenges, you have retained a clear focus on keeping pupils safe and enabling them to thrive, academically and personally. Consequently, pupils enjoy coming to Long Lane Primary, and they are well prepared for moving to secondary school at the end of Year 6.

Your school motto of 'Strive to succeed' is palpable across the school. You, your staff and governors use a shared understanding of the school's current strengths to identify appropriate priorities for development. Your collective work since the last inspection to increase pupils' ownership of their learning is evident. Pupils respond positively to well-established routines that help them to manage their own behaviour successfully. They work purposefully and collaboratively in lessons, practising and revisiting what they learn so that their skills and knowledge develop securely over time. As a result, pupils' academic outcomes are high, with above-average proportions of pupils meeting at least the expected standards in reading, writing, phonics and mathematics by the end of each key stage. However, pupils' progress, while broadly average by the end of key stage 2 in 2018, has been more variable across the school over time. Consequently, a smaller proportion of pupils achieved a greater depth of learning last year, both by the end of key stages 1 and 2, than was the case nationally.

The journey of improvement in middle leadership has been a complex one. Since the last inspection, school leadership has changed notably, with the former deputy headteacher being promoted to headship in another school. You have spent time using your expertise to support other local schools. Middle leadership roles have been restructured to meet your school's current needs more effectively than in the past. Some of these changes have been very recent, so the roles are in the relatively early stages of evolution.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's approach to safeguarding is thorough, with pupils' safety and well-being at its core. Leaders ensure that pupils have useful, age-appropriate opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. They respond in a timely way to themes that emerge across the school and in the local area, such as issues linked to emotional health and well-being. Pupils know what to do if they have concerns about their own welfare, and they trust adults to help them. Consequently, pupils say that they feel safe in school. Parents who shared their views during the inspection were highly positive about how well their children are cared for. One parent captured this well when they said: 'Staff have not only taught my children well but have looked after them amazingly!' Others spoke of adults being 'approachable and caring' and 'providing good emotional support' to pupils.

Leaders ensure that the school's safeguarding policy is promoted well through useful and regular staff training. As a result, staff and governors understand their duties and carry them out effectively. Recruitment and vetting checks on adults working in the school are carried out diligently and recorded carefully. Leaders take appropriate steps to support pupils they have identified as being vulnerable. They work appropriately with experts from beyond the school and keep suitable records of their actions. This promotes the culture of safeguarding successfully.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I focused on how effectively leaders and governors use additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and to develop sports provision, whether pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum that is taught consistently well, and whether pupils' progress is more consistently strong than in the past.
- Leaders give careful thought to how they support disadvantaged pupils through their use of pupil premium funding. They keep detailed records of their work with pupils, using ongoing reviews to identify how well pupils are doing academically and directing next steps for further help. Some pupils make very strong progress with their learning as a result of leaders' approach. However, other disadvantaged pupils are less successful and so, overall, the impact of this funding is variable.
- Sports funding is used appropriately. Pupils enjoy rich and varied opportunities to engage in physical activity, with their learning in lessons being supplemented effectively by their involvement in a diverse range of clubs. On the day of the inspection, a large group of pupils participated enthusiastically in netball club at

the start of the day. Leaders strike a suitable balance between investment in staff training, resources and access to competitive sporting events. As a result, almost all pupils reported that they feel encouraged to be physically active, and above-average proportions meet the national curriculum requirements for swimming by the end of Year 6. Governors make sure that sports premium funding meets its intended purpose, and they publish annual reports on the school website that identify its impact.

- The middle leadership team works effectively to monitor and develop teaching and learning across the wider curriculum. Leaders' focus on pupils' progression supports teachers in planning work that builds pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding successfully over time. This work is securely in place in core subjects and evolving over time in foundation subjects. Pupils' work shows appropriate depth and progression across a range of topics and subjects. Pupils are clearly proud of their wider curriculum learning and positive about the usefulness of their 'shared learning' homework. Currently, the links between learning in the early years and the rest of the school are less clearly defined.
- Throughout the school, learning is purposeful, because teachers plan work that engages pupils successfully. During the inspection, teachers' work to develop thinking in mathematics was particularly evident and was being supported well by high-quality conversations between pupils and adults. Pupils write and calculate accurately. Their routine reviews and editing of their work support their progress well.
- Leaders have put secure processes in place that enable staff to make valid judgements about how well pupils are doing. Their useful systems help them to track pupils' attainment and progress carefully over time. Currently, leaders and governors focus more closely on pupils' attainment than the progress they make from their different starting points. Consequently, they have not always identified where pupils should be attaining even more highly or prioritised what further actions will help them to make good progress over time.
- Current pupils are making better progress than was the case for some pupils in the school in the recent past. Across all year groups and from a range of different starting points, almost all pupils are on track to make good progress by the end of their current key stage. Some variations remain between subjects and year groups in the proportions who are making even better progress. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is currently in line with that of other pupils in school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they use what they know about pupils' progress to direct their future actions more precisely so that their impact is maximised, particularly for those who are disadvantaged
- teachers' ongoing work leads to greater cohesion in the school's broader curriculum, so that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are developed consistently well, particularly in the early years.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Moles
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and your special educational needs coordinator to talk about a range of issues. Together, we visited breakfast club, and also spent time in six out of the seven classes in the school, to observe learning, look at work and talk to pupils. I held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and governors, and with a representative of the local authority. I also spoke informally to parents in the school playground at the start of the day. I reviewed your safeguarding arrangements, including the school's records of checks on adults working in the school. I considered relevant information on the school website and that which was provided by school leaders, specifically information relating to pupils' progress. I also took account of 31 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire, including 30 free-text comments, and survey responses from 69 pupils and 22 members of staff.