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Dear Mr Smith

Short inspection of Landscore Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 September 2016, 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 December 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You took up your role as acting headteacher in September 2016, as did the acting deputy headteacher. Nevertheless, you both bring to your new posts a wealth of experience and understanding of the school and its context, having been part of the senior leadership prior to stepping up to your current positions. You are working well as a team, together with the rest of the staff, to ensure that Landscore Primary School is a thriving learning community in which all pull together for the benefit of pupils' education.

Despite only having been in post a short time, you are providing dynamic leadership and you have set about overhauling key aspects of the school's work, such as improving the way that the curriculum and the assessment and tracking systems interlink. You have very clear insight, not only into those aspects of the school's work that are successfully promoting pupils' progress, but also into the areas that need further attention. As a result, your plans for the next phase of the school's development are robust and based on sound analysis.

In your endeavours to continually improve the life chances of the pupils in your care, you are ably supported by the governing body and, in particular, a very experienced chair, who shares your understanding of the school's strengths and areas that require development. The governing body and school leaders have

recently overseen a programme of expansion in both pupil numbers and in the premises of the school. A high-quality early years building has recently been opened and further developments are currently underway. These significant changes have not, however, been allowed to interfere with the quality of education provided by the school.

Indeed, parents as a whole are very happy with the school, with virtually all saying that they would recommend it to another parent. In their comments in the online survey, Parent View, many speak of the school as 'wonderful' or 'fantastic', with a number remarking on the 'positive atmosphere' it creates. They particularly value the work that the school does to help pupils who need to catch up or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents clearly see the school as a central and important feature of the local community. Nonetheless, some parents would like to see their children receiving homework more regularly.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders, including governors, have successfully established a culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff have a very good knowledge of the pupils in their care and are particularly vigilant to spot any child who might be at risk from harm. The key concept of 'early help' is built into the school's safeguarding and child protection work. School leaders could demonstrate how swift action by the school had helped to address concerns promptly and prevent any risks from escalating. All the pupils who responded to the pupil survey state that they felt safe and that there is an adult in the school to whom they can turn if anything is worrying them. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- You have been the special educational needs coordinator for some time and are retaining that role as part of your responsibilities as the acting headteacher. You have a deep understanding of the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice' (2015) and the principles it enshrines. You and the staff at the school are motivated by a strong belief that aspirations and expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities should be unrelentingly high and underpinned by high-quality teaching.
- The school has robust systems in place to monitor the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They help teachers to plan effectively for individual pupils' needs and to get the balance right between intervention and involvement in regular classroom activities. The emphasis at all times, however, is on inclusivity.
- The deployment of teaching assistants and other adults to work with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a particular strength of the school. Many examples were seen during the inspection of teaching assistants working very effectively with individuals or groups of pupils by focusing on their specific needs. Communication between teaching

assistants and classroom teachers is strong and ensures continuity and consistency in the provision for pupils.

- As a result of the approach taken by the school, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This was confirmed not only by the school's own tracking system but also by observations of learning in lessons and examination of pupils' work.
- The school is introducing a new system of assessment and monitoring which dovetails well with the planning of the curriculum. They are, indeed, two sides of the same coin and this allows teachers to plan and assess against the key elements of what pupils know, understand and can do across a range of subjects and in all year groups. As a result, school leaders' in-depth understanding of pupils' progress is also improving rapidly.
- Historic information about pupils' outcomes shows that at times in the past outcomes for boys and girls have sometimes varied across the curriculum. For example, in 2015 at key stage 2, girls did much better in writing than boys, while in mathematics the situation was reversed. The school is well aware of the need to tackle this and its efforts to do so are beginning to pay off. As a consequence, for example, girls are now making better progress in mathematics at key stage 2, albeit from lower starting points than boys. There is still a difference in outcomes for boys and girls in writing and the school clearly understands that this must be a key priority for further attention. School leaders have recently redesigned the writing curriculum to be more engaging for boys, and observations in lessons show that this is beginning to have an impact, but it is too early to say to what extent.
- At the time of the last inspection it was noted that children get off to a 'flying start' in the early years, and this remains the case. The new early years building provides children with a range of indoor and outdoor opportunities to learn and there are plans to enhance this further. The leader of the early years has a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in this part of the school's work. This enables her and other leaders to have very focused and precise targets for improvement, such as improving the writing of summer-born boys in the early years. She has established very productive relationships with the local pre-schools and has been working effectively with them to improve children's readiness for the requirements of the Reception Year.
- Historic information on pupils' attainment at key stage 1 shows that this has been consistently good for some time, especially in reading. Nonetheless, the results of the 2016 national curriculum assessments at key stage 1 were not as strong as the school had expected and leaders are very aware of the need to redouble their efforts in this area. The new assessment and tracking systems and their links to the curriculum are a key part of this. Early evidence indicates that this new approach is already having some impact but, as with other recent initiatives, it is too early to say what its full extent will be.
- Reading is a central part of the life of the school and particular focus is placed on helping those who need to catch up, especially disadvantaged pupils. A targeted programme of work by the reading recovery teacher has enabled many such pupils to make rapid improvements in their reading. I

listened to a number of pupils with a range of abilities reading aloud, and this confirms that the school's work to improve all pupils' reading is effective. The proportion of pupils who passed the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2016 is higher than the national figure.

- School leaders use the pupil premium effectively to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils and to improve their life chances by addressing barriers to achievement. Extensive scrutiny of the work produced by disadvantaged pupils shows that many are making good progress; this was particularly true of the most able disadvantaged pupils in English and mathematics at key stage 2. Historic published information on the performance of disadvantaged pupils shows that in many areas of the curriculum they are making progress and attaining at the same rates as other pupils nationally. This is particularly true, for example, in reading at key stage 2 or in the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in the early years. Nonetheless, there are still areas, including at key stage 1, where the difference between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally needs to diminish further.
- The school has effective systems in place to identify the most able disadvantaged pupils and to ensure that the pupil premium is used to meet their needs. Opportunities are provided, for example, for the most able disadvantaged pupils to widen their cultural horizons through music or other creative arts. This helps them to build their self-confidence and has a positive impact on their academic performance, too.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Teaching and assessment in key stage 1 enable pupils to sustain and build further on the good progress they make in the early years
- Recent improvements in the tracking of pupils' progress are thoroughly embedded in order to provide teachers with increasingly robust information on which to base their planning
- Pupils' progress in writing, especially that of boys, improves so that it matches that made in reading and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lee
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met regularly with you and the acting deputy headteacher as part of a professional dialogue throughout the day. I also met with members of the governing body, including the chair, the leader of early years and the teacher responsible for the reading recovery programme. I talked to other staff informally during the day. I undertook observations of learning in lessons, including as part of learning walks. I examined pupils' work across a range of subjects, ages and abilities. I listened to pupils reading aloud. Before the inspection, I examined a variety of documents provided by the school, including a summary of its self-evaluation. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and also took into account 87 responses to the online survey, Parent View. In addition I analysed 33 responses to the staff survey and 20 responses to the pupil survey.

In particular, the inspection focused on the following key lines of enquiry:

- How successfully are leaders ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress?
- How effectively are leaders tackling differences in academic outcomes for boys and girls?
- How successfully are leaders improving attainment at key stage 1?
- How effectively do school leaders use the pupil premium to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, particularly the most able disadvantaged pupils?
- Is safeguarding effective?