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Miss Lisa Strange
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Dear Miss Strange

Short inspection of Staveley CofE School

Following my visit to the school on 17 April 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since September 2018, you have stepped up to the role of acting headteacher in the absence of the substantive headteacher. You have worked in close partnership with the diocese and the local authority to ensure that the school continues to be a warm, welcoming and positive learning environment during this time. You have ensured that pupils benefit from a rich curriculum that is carefully planned to meet their needs and interests. The Christian values of respect, compassion, resilience and friendship are evident in the work of the school.

Pupils do well at this school. Most children who leave the early years achieve a good level of development. In recent years, the proportion of pupils who achieve the required standard in the national phonics screening check has been in line with other pupils nationally. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 has increased over three consecutive years. Pupils typically leave key stage 2 having made similar progress to other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Assessment information and work in pupils' books indicate that pupils continue to make good progress across the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy attending school. They said that they feel safe and well cared for. They said that bullying is very rare and that occasionally pupils can display silly behaviours while playing games outside. They said that you and the teachers are very quick in responding to any incidents of poor behaviour in a fair manner. Pupils said that behaviour in lessons is good. Older pupils told me about the range of

responsibilities that they have. They can become an assembly monitor, they can read to the younger pupils and train to become a young leader of games. They enjoy the many trips and visits that enrich the curriculum. Older pupils told me about a residential visit to Glasgow where they visited a museum, an art gallery and a theatre show. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe both online and while away from school. The curriculum prepares them well for life in modern Britain and the next stages of their education.

You have worked in partnership with the staff to formulate a school development plan that set out relevant priorities to develop the school further. You carefully monitor the progress of different groups of pupils. Your work to evaluate the effectiveness of your actions is in its infancy, however. You have put plans in place to check on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment as part of your self-evaluation. Presently, it is too early to judge the impact of this work.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They have supported you well in your role as acting headteacher by acting upon diocesan and local authority advice. They are aware of the strengths of the school and where further improvements are needed. They have overseen the use of additional funding well, ensuring that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress in line with their peers. They carefully oversee the spending of the sports premium funding. They told me about the many recent sporting successes the school has achieved, most notably in swimming. The sports premium is used effectively to engage the pupils in a range of sports which include orienteering, cross-country running and open-water swimming.

At the previous inspection, the inspectors asked school leaders to improve the quality of writing and spelling. Since then, you have ensured that the foundations of good writing begin in the early years. Children enjoy their writing. Activities are interesting and well planned to spark enthusiasm. From looking at pupils' assessment information and scrutinising the quality of writing across the school, I could see that pupils are making good progress. A focus on spellings has paid off. Pupils have clear systems to help them apply better spelling. Much of this work builds upon effective teaching of phonics in the early years and key stage 1. As pupils move through the school their writing becomes more sophisticated. The application of grammatical features develops in a logical sequence. The subject leader for English works alongside other leaders from your partner schools to share good practice. You, along with the subject leader for English, have worked in close partnership with a local authority adviser to make checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' written work, ensuring the standards remain high.

Safeguarding is effective.

As the designated lead for safeguarding, you have ensured that the systems in place to safeguard pupils are effective. You have made careful checks on the suitability of adults who work in and those who visit the school. The school business manager and two members of the governing body are trained in safer recruitment.

Staff members have received training in basic awareness of safeguarding. Staff have also received 'Prevent' duty training, which enables them to spot signs of potential radicalisation.

Staff members that I spoke to were clear in their safeguarding responsibilities. They are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns. You have also used the support of national charities and the community police to inform pupils about how to stay safe. You keep detailed records of your work with children's social care.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused on three lines of enquiry. The first of these related to how well leaders communicate their actions to parents and carers. This was because of a small number of negative responses about the school on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. However, these views are not representative of the majority of parents who communicated with me during the inspection. You communicate with parents regularly. Parents receive an update each Friday about the work of the school. Frequent social media posts keep parents informed about the wider culture and sporting successes of the pupils. Parents are regularly invited into school; for example, parents of children in the early years enjoy attending the 'stay and play' sessions. An active parents' association ensures that the community is involved in a wide range of fun and exciting activities, from Easter bingo to cycling to London on static bicycles. Members of staff meet pupils as they arrive at school each day. Despite these many positive efforts, a few parents continue to have concerns about the leadership and management of the school.
- The second area that I focused on related to the progress that pupils make in mathematics. In response to a decline in progress that pupils have made in mathematics at the end of key stage 2, you have put mathematical development at the centre of your school development plan. You have engaged successfully with the local authority to make checks on the quality of teaching and work in pupils' books. You have set out clear expectations for what should be taught during mathematics lessons. As a school, you work in partnership with a local mathematics hub. Several teachers have engaged in regular training alongside colleagues from other schools. They told me that this work is really helping them to think about the sequence of teaching. From looking at assessment information and work in pupils' books, I could see that in most classes work is suitably challenging for pupils. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to reason their answers in depth across a range of problem-solving and investigative work.
- The final area that I looked at during the inspection was attendance. Pupils' attendance was below the national average in 2016 and 2017. During this time, rates of persistent absence rose above the national average. Recently, you have worked in closer partnership with the local authority attendance officer to help sustain improvements. Attendance at the end of the previous academic year was better than the national average and rates of persistent absence have fallen. Information for pupils currently in the school indicates that this has been maintained and no groups of pupils are disadvantaged by poor attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils are challenged sufficiently to develop their reasoning through problem-solving and investigative mathematical activities
- they continue to develop plans to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, closely aligned to the school's self-evaluation
- they continue to develop lines of communication with parents about aspects of the school's work.

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

John Donald
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and two teachers. Together, we visited each class, where we spoke to pupils and viewed examples of their work. I met with seven members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. I held a meeting with a local authority adviser. I held two telephone calls, one with a senior adviser from the local authority, the other with a representative of the Diocese of Carlisle.

I met with parents before school and I considered two written responses I received from parents. I spoke to pupils informally at lunchtime. I considered the 56 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 42 free-text responses. I considered the 12 responses to the staff survey and the 40 responses to the pupil survey.

I scrutinised a range of safeguarding documentation, including the single central safeguarding register. I examined documentation relating to assessment and development planning.