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Mrs Tracey Cunningham
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Cunningham

Short inspection of William Law CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 April 2017 with Marek Krzanicki, Ofsted Inspector, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Along with your senior leadership team, you have sustained high-quality leadership. You have successfully maintained the good standards of teaching, learning and pastoral care identified in the previous inspection report.

Many parents are positive about the school. Both on the day of inspection and in Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, parents commented on the 'dedicated, hardworking staff', the 'quality of teaching' and how pupils are taught 'core values... such as kindness'.

You recognise the critical importance of good-quality teaching in improving the achievements of pupils across the curriculum. To support staff development, you invest in regular, intensive training and coaching to secure the best possible provision for the pupils in your school. For example, staff have developed their teaching of writing and pupils are making improved progress. You and your leadership team are committed to raising standards and have high aspirations and expectations of both staff and pupils. Despite staff changes, the focus on improvement has not wavered.

Governance at William Law is rigorous. The governing board is well led and provides

both challenge and support to the school. Governors are fully invested in both raising educational standards and strengthening the ethos of the school. Governors' understanding of the school's strengths and areas for continued improvement is strong and they bring a breadth of expertise and knowledge. They use information gathered during frequent informal and formal visits to the school to question and to commend the quality of education provided.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They have very well developed attitudes towards learning. They are resilient to difficult challenges; as one pupil stated to an inspector, 'if you don't wobble, you're not learning'. In every class, inspectors observed highly focused pupils collaborating with each other to support their understanding. The variety of challenges posed by teachers in different areas of the curriculum has helped to support pupils' independent learning. You have also ensured that pupils have access to a broad and rich curriculum, including opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures, French, music, and to access a range of after-school activities. Pupils are also encouraged to reflect on their learning across the curriculum through learning journals and in response to teachers' questions. Many pupils told the inspectors that this helped them to improve their understanding. Pupils are very appreciative of the wide range of opportunities that William Law offers them. For example, pupils told the inspectors about their enjoyment of 'wow' days, such as the 'French day' where they dressed as the French flag.

You correctly assess provision in the early years to be a strength of the school. Strong leadership in early years has resulted in children making accelerated progress in many key areas. The learning environment is very well organised to stimulate and develop children's skills, knowledge and understanding. The newly constructed outdoor space is innovative and exciting for the children. They develop crucial communication skills alongside fine and gross motor skills through a wealth of carefully structured activities. Children regularly exceed national expectations. Staff develop children's writing and phonics skills particularly well in preparation for key stage 1. The transition from early years to Year 1 is managed very effectively, as the early years lead liaises frequently with the Year 1 team and provides critical guidance regarding the teaching of phonics.

You and your team take effective action where you consider improvements are required. For example, as a result of your developments in the teaching of mathematics, outcomes at key stage 1 have continued to exceed national standards for the most able pupils. You are fully aware of the areas that require improvement and have embedded robust strategies with clear monitoring and evaluation procedures. For example, you and your team review Year 1 pupils' phonics development more frequently to identify issues with individual pupils more swiftly. As a consequence, you are able to coordinate effective additional support for pupils to ensure that they are able to access the key stage 1 curriculum with ease and confidence. You recognise the importance of raising the achievements of disadvantaged pupils in many areas of the curriculum. As a consequence, you have introduced a clearer, more precise, assessment system which has already helped to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. You are able to coordinate

additional support more swiftly. However, middle leaders are not an explicit part of this process, which may impede improvement. Additionally, you acknowledge that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, should be making accelerated progress in reading.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils told the inspectors that they were very happy at the school and that staff kept them safe. In particular, pupils cited the learning mentors as key sources of support when they encounter difficulties, both within and outside of school. Most parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children were safe and well supported in their learning.

Pupils understand what constitutes bullying. Pupils explained to the inspectors that bullying is rare at the school and school records confirm that this is the case. The school is highly vigilant about the dangers posed by the internet. All staff have been trained to ensure that pupils' experiences of the internet are safe. Consequently, pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and what to do if they are contacted by a stranger.

Leaders, including governors, ensure that safeguarding arrangements are robust. Records are meticulously kept and updated periodically when appropriate. Safeguarding leads are tenacious in securing the best outcomes for the children in their care. The school's safeguarding systems are highly effective, resulting in timely and appropriate action for pupils who require support.

Inspection findings

- To ascertain that the school remained good, one of my key lines of enquiry was about phonics. Test results in 2016 demonstrated that Year 1 pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, did not meet national standards. In addition, disadvantaged pupils had also underachieved in 2015. You understood the vital importance of ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make the same level of progress as other pupils and have embedded a range of strategies to achieve this. Using a new assessment system, you have been able to identify barriers for these pupils more forensically. As a result, you have introduced targeted support such as one-to-one tuition and regular opportunities to listen to pupils read. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils are currently making improved progress.
- My second line of enquiry was about reading and writing at key stage 2. Pupils', including disadvantaged pupils', progress in reading and writing declined in 2016. You and your leadership team have a very clear awareness of the critical role of reading for pleasure in developing pupils' understanding of texts. You have introduced new, challenging, texts to each year group, such as 'The Hobbit'. You have also ensured that every pupil gets the opportunity to access either the school or community library weekly, culminating in the provision of electronic readers for every Year 6 pupil. Pupils explained how much they valued the extensive range of reading material available to them at school.
- You and your leadership team have invested a great deal in ensuring that all staff

are confident and up to date in their understanding of how pupils engage in reading. Pupils access a wide range of texts and their reading progress is monitored effectively to ensure progress. However, the most able pupils still struggle with writing about their understanding of texts and still require additional, more specific support. Using the new assessment system, you have been able to accurately identify these pupils. Middle leaders are active in suggesting appropriate strategies to improve pupils' achievements, but not in monitoring and evaluating their impact. Consequently, the role of middle leaders in driving improvements is limited.

- Writing at key stage 2 declined in 2016 from impressive levels in 2015, but this is not currently a cause for concern. Pupils' writing skills develop well and they have the opportunity to write for a range of audiences, purposes and text types. The literacy team has also trained staff to embed specific grammar points in a weekly cycle of reading and writing to improve pupils' understanding of how language works.
- The third line of enquiry focused on the progress of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, across the curriculum. The most able pupils achieved well in mathematics in 2016, but not in reading and writing. The most able pupils in key stage 2 make good use of their higher-level skills to solve the more complex mathematical problems they are provided with. They relish the independent challenges and develop innovative mathematical reasoning skills. You have introduced a breadth of strategies to support progress in reading and writing, and the evidence from pupils' books suggests that they are having an impact in writing. However, the most able pupils continue to struggle with articulating their understanding about the themes and characters in texts and more specific support is required to ensure that they make accelerated progress.
- The most able pupils make good progress in history and geography. The curriculum offers opportunities to support their writing and reading skills. Work in pupils' books demonstrates marked progress in understanding and knowledge. Similarly, the most able pupils make good progress in science and their books demonstrate the development of key scientific skills. Pupils enjoy learning French and develop a strong understanding of how the language works and an appreciation of French culture.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils are set tasks that are appropriate and are given consistently effective support to ensure that they make accelerated progress in reading
- they involve middle leaders in measuring and evaluating the progress pupils make across the curriculum with precision and rigour
- the progress of disadvantaged pupils in every area of the curriculum is at least equal to the progress of all pupils nationally.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- During the course of this inspection, we held meetings with you, other senior and middle leaders and a group of five governors, including the chair of governors.
- We spoke with pupils informally in classrooms and when walking around the school site. We also met with two groups of 13 pupils.
- During two tours of the school with you and your leadership team, we visited each class and observed pupils at work.
- We undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work in their books and folders.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, along with the school's record of checks carried out on staff working at the school.
- A range of documents were analysed or discussed, including: the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; documents relating to pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour; minutes of governor meetings and curriculum plans.
- I considered the views of 58 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views parents expressed via free-text.