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Ms Beth McLaren
Headteacher
Little Milton Church of England Primary School
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Oxford
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Dear Ms McLaren

Short inspection of Little Milton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 March 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 January 2011.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since your recent appointment as headteacher in January 2016, you have identified accurately the school's strengths and weaknesses. Bringing your experience of working in the school as a class teacher to bear, you have a thorough knowledge of what the school does well and where it needs to improve. You are taking on your new role with vim and vigour, energising those around you and setting a clear, upward pathway. You are beginning to make changes to ways of working. For example, you expect the very youngest children to attend whole-school assemblies now. Such modifications are reinforcing the school's aims, an element of which includes, 'conducting assemblies in ways that are inclusive of the whole school community'. Parents are complimentary and have confidence in you, praising your 'able leadership'. Governors play their part well and have been a steadying, guiding influence in a period of great change. Together you have laid firm foundations from which the school can continue to improve.

This is a much smaller than an average-sized school. Every nook and cranny is utilised as you are determined to meet the needs of both pupils and the local community well. Parents appreciate the additional clubs on offer and take-up of places at the early morning breakfast club is high. Sports funding is used well and, despite limited outdoor space, pupils' participation is not impeded. Using local sports facilities, pupils enjoy swimming lessons and other sports on a regular basis. The school has a warm, family feel and pupils delight in special opportunities, such as

looking after the school hamster, 'Pebbles', during holiday times. Many parents are particularly pleased with how well their children settle, make friends and develop self-assurance. One parent shared a view expressed by many stating: 'This school has increased the confidence of my child hugely. He is getting the learning support that he requires, feels safe and has found the confidence to make friends. He is encouraged in all levels of his work and is pushed appropriately. This school is very well managed and has a wonderful feel to it.'

Many children start school with the skills and understanding typical for their age. In the early years, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development is above that seen nationally. In Key Stage 2 in 2015, every pupil met the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher levels at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 2015 was above that seen nationally.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to accelerate pupils' progress further and broaden pupils' cultural awareness and understanding. Leaders have addressed these aspects efficiently with the following results:

- The majority of pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils in current cohorts are making good progress.
- The proportion of pupils who meet the standard required in the Year 1 national screening check of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is above the national average. This too has risen in recent years because of leaders making appropriate changes to teaching and learning.
- Standards have risen since the previous inspection and more pupils are achieving the standards expected for their age. All Year 6 pupils in 2015 were well equipped to start secondary school with the reading, writing and mathematics skills needed for continued success in Year 7.
- Leaders have reviewed and revised the school's religious education curriculum. Pupils now have a greater understanding of other beliefs. This work has been enhanced by regular school visits to other places of worship, such as the Oxford synagogue and Hindu temple in Neasden.
- Work with partner schools, such as those in Italy, France and Germany, has enhanced pupils' European cultural awareness effectively.
- Pupils have a strong sense of what it means to be a global citizen. They are proud of the strong links between Little Milton Primary School and Caesar Mlumbi School in South Africa, forged through the British Council's 'Connecting classrooms' project. Thoughtful gestures such as pupils sending their superfluous hymn books to the pupils of Caesar Mlumbi School bring pupils' social, moral and cultural education to the forefront of their minds. Governors have also visited this South African school and the headteacher of Caesar Mlumbi School has visited Little Milton Primary School twice in recent

times. Such a strong and enduring connection between the two schools has ensured that pupils' cultural awareness is developed very effectively.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and records are detailed and of high quality. Safeguarding policies have been strengthened in recent times as leaders have learned well from others, replicating and learning from effective practice elsewhere. The safeguarding governor keeps a sharp oversight ensuring that procedures are robust. You and your governors ensure that the appropriate checks are made on adults' suitability to work with children. You have made good use of outside expertise to ensure that the school keeps up with the government's expectations, and procedures reflect the very latest guidance.

Governors have completed safer recruitment training, putting their skills and expertise to good effect during the recent headteacher recruitment process. They did not shy away from utilising expertise from other governors within the local cluster of schools. Governors rightly placed high importance on ensuring that this process was spot on. The local authority has recognised the rigour with which governors applied themselves to the task in hand, and has invited governors to share their new-found expertise more widely.

Risk assessments are in place and appropriate actions are taken to ensure that safety is of high priority, such as the use of adults to supervise school access points during busy times. Recent improvements to site security, such as the installation of secure fencing with a security entrance, are well thought out. Staff consider pupils' safety carefully, including when taking pupils on trips, such as the recent visit to the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford.

Pupils feel safe. They have full trust in the adults who look after them, feeling they could confidently share their worries if the need arose. They note that their fellow pupils are kind and there is no bullying in the school. During my visit, pupils told me they all had 'many friends'.

Inspection findings

- You have spent time wisely getting to grips with monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. You make regular visits to classrooms and gauge strengths and weaknesses accurately. This enables you to provide helpful feedback to staff, in order to develop their skills and expertise. You are determined to improve the quality of teaching and learning further. You rightly acknowledge that teaching assistants could have a sharper impact on accelerating pupils' progress in lessons. When we looked at pupils' books together, you were able to identify accurately strengths and aspects that would help pupils move forward more rapidly in their learning. The school is well placed to improve further as you have established a strong foundation on which to build.

- You have promptly identified staff needs and instigated appropriate training opportunities promptly. Despite several changes to staffing this year, training opportunities such as those relating to the new school's assessment system are helping to develop teachers' skills and expertise appropriately. Pupils have high levels of confidence in their teachers. In Ofsted's pupil online survey, the vast majority noted that their teachers help them to do their best. Teaching assistants also appreciate the opportunity to learn new skills, particularly when supporting pupils with additional needs. They are, however, yet to apply these new skills confidently to accelerating pupils' progress in larger group sessions.
- You are determined to raise standards further. Teachers pay close attention to encouraging pupils to spell accurately. As a result, pupils take great care, making corrections where necessary, learning from mistakes and practising unfamiliar words. However, in some aspects of writing, teachers have lower expectations. Pupils' general presentation can lack care from time to time. You are aware of the need to instil higher expectations in this regard.
- Children in the early years make good progress and enjoy a variety of activities that cover all aspects of learning. Assessment is regular. Parents are contributing more to children's assessment information, working with school staff more closely. Children are confident in the adults who care for them and are considerate towards one another. Routines are understood and children respond well to instructions, such as in tidy-up time, all playing their part diligently.
- The local authority is providing helpful support during this transitional phase for the school. You are benefiting from the local authority's early headship programme. This has ensured that the transition from one headteacher to another has appeared seamless. Other support from the diocese, focused on the monitoring of teaching and learning, has also been forthcoming.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive. The majority of pupils come to school from outside the school's geographic catchment area. Parents talk fondly about 'this happy and safe school'. The breakfast club is popular with working parents and pupils enjoy a calm, welcoming start to the school day. The vast majority of parents and pupils would recommend the school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils say they particularly enjoy computing and learning a modern foreign language. They enjoy scientific investigations that involve hands-on learning. Pupils in the Year 5 and Year 6 class relished the opportunity to design a way to test the electrical conductivity of different materials. Enthused by their teacher's subject knowledge, they eagerly set about their experiment: predicting, reasoning and discussing their findings confidently.

- Parents speak highly of your attention to detail, such as the recent screening checks for colour blindness. As a result of early identification, some pupils are benefiting from modifications in the classroom and achieving greater success with learning. This work exemplifies your high levels of commitment to the pupils of Little Milton Primary School and your determination to meet their needs well.
- Governors have recently restructured their committees, streamlining their work to complement school improvement priorities. They work tirelessly, determined to meet their statutory duties well. Governors fully involve themselves in the life of the school. They regularly attend parents' events, such as a recent meeting about assessment, ensuring that the views of parents feed in to the future development of the school well.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed particularly well. Staff are skilful at ensuring that all pupils are capable of finding resolutions and reflecting on their actions when, from time to time, there are disagreements. Pupils behave well in lessons and listen attentively. All staff agree that pupils' behaviour is good and pupils say this is a very friendly school. Pupils are proud when their efforts are rewarded and are particularly pleased when their work is displayed in the good work book and shared in assembly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning so that teachers have higher expectations of the pupils' presentation skills in writing
- continue to develop the role of teaching assistants so they play an active role in supporting pupils in lessons to achieve high standards.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Oxford and the Director of Children's Services for Oxfordshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority. I also met with seven pupils and I took account of the 29 responses to the pupil online survey. I observed learning in four lessons, all jointly with you. We scrutinised pupils' work together.

I took account of 45 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also took account of the views of 10 members of the school team who responded to the online survey for staff. I analysed a range of school documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures, including the school's risk assessments. We discussed your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness.