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Mrs Fiona Lawson-Ross
Headteacher
Long Marston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Angram Road
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Dear Mrs Lawson-Ross

Short inspection of Long Marston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 November 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 July 2012.

This school continues to be good.

You, the staff team and the governing body have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You ensure that pupils benefit from the nurturing culture provided by the school. You and the staff know each pupil really well. You also ensure that, through your collaboration with the Star Alliance and other schools, pupils get a very broad range of opportunities, including challenging activities for the most able pupils and competitive sports for all.

The very detailed progress information you collect and analyse, matched by the work in pupils' books, confirms your view that individual pupils, from their different starting points, make good progress. The range of learning opportunities provided ensures that pupils develop as well-rounded, thoughtful young people. The school's values of 'integrity, creativity and a love of life', aligned to fundamental British values, permeate the school. Pupils demonstrate their understanding of these values throughout the school day.

Since the previous inspection, progress in mathematics has improved across most year groups. However, you were disappointed that pupils' progress in mathematics by the end of Year 6 in the last school year was not strong. Your detailed knowledge of each pupil helped you to understand the reasons for this. Your analysis of the results and subsequent actions are ensuring that current pupils are making much stronger progress and are better prepared for the new national tests.

You have worked hard to address the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Parents commented on the useful information they receive about their children, particularly about the different methods of teaching you are developing. Many parents were positive about your holistic approach to their child's development. Parents whose children are new to the school indicate that their children settle quickly and benefit from the nurturing culture that pervades the school.

Pupils now make good use of technology to support their learning, and the careful selection of web-based programmes is helping pupils continue their learning at home.

Since the previous inspection, you have successfully improved pupils' presentation of their work. Your own records, evidence from external visitors' reports and pupils' books from the last school year demonstrate that this is the case. However, you were disappointed that some of the current pupils' books do not exemplify the high standard of presentation that you expect. You were equally disappointed that some of the new approaches to encourage good presentation were not being fully implemented by all staff. You and the staff have shown that you have the capacity to secure improvements in how pupils present their work. You know the next step is to ensure that improvements are sustained.

Although subject leaders are developing their roles, you recognise that they need further support to develop their analytical skills when checking individual pupils' progress from their starting points.

The school has faced some challenges since the previous inspection. These have included the impact of two concurrent periods of maternity leave and falling pupil numbers, which resulted in some financial difficulties. Governors are working hard with the diocese and local authority to ensure that future changes to the leadership structure secure the long-term future of the school. In spending time working on the long-term future of the school, governors have not kept up to date with the requirements to publish information on the school's website or ensured that all policies are kept fully up to date.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff are well trained and know that they must refer any concerns about pupils or staff directly to you or, if about you, to the chair of the governing body. You make sure that all the required checks on staff working in the school are carried out and recorded. You ensure that staff's attitudes to safeguarding are tested during interviews, and records show that staff know how to identify potential concerns.

Pupils and their parents are confident that they are safe in school. Pupils are learning how to keep themselves safe through a wide range of activities, not least in the use of the school's wood. They learn to undertake risky activities safely. This builds their resilience and confidence.

Inspection findings

- During visits to lessons, it was clear that pupils are keen to work on the range of activities provided for them. They know what they are learning and what they need to do to make progress. Teachers skilfully plan work that challenges pupils who are at different stages and ages within each class. As a result, pupils move on quickly to their next steps in learning.
- 'Learning questions', set at the start of each lesson, ensure that pupils are clear about what they are learning and can easily check whether they are on track. Challenges, particularly those seen in mathematics, are presented at different levels. The most able pupils choose work that challenges them rather than repeating work they find too easy. Pupils know to work things out for themselves and are not reliant on waiting for staff to help them. The work in pupils' books confirms teachers' assessments, which show that more pupils are on track to work at a higher standard than Year 6 pupils achieved in summer 2016.
- Over the last 12 months you have worked with the local authority and the Sherburn, Tadcaster and Rural Teaching School Alliance (the STAR Alliance) to adopt new ways of working, particularly in supporting pupils who experience barriers to making good or better progress. For example, teachers now implement short bursts of additional support and extra teaching for those pupils who are at risk of falling behind. In addition, more frequent testing of pupils' knowledge and understanding is giving you valuable information. Teachers use this information to plan teaching activities, which are tailored to address the gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, they catch up quickly.
- You work with the local authority and the STAR Alliance to ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate. This includes the assessments of the children entering their first year in school.
- You check teachers' practice and ask other professionals to guide you in making judgments about the effectiveness of teaching. However, you do not always link the quality of work in pupils' books to the overall effectiveness of teaching. Consequently, your feedback to teachers does not cover this aspect of teaching. You recognise that this could help to sharpen teachers' practice further.
- Pupils' behaviour remains a strength of the school. They are keen to learn and eager to come to school, and their attendance is above the national average. When the bell goes at the start of the day and at the end of playtime, pupils line up smartly. They quickly switch back to work mode from the energetic play they have just enjoyed.
- The youngest children are well supported as they move from their previous setting to school. Work in their learning journals shows that their development is accurately recorded and that they are making good progress. You have rightly identified the need to improve the outdoor provision.

- A very small number of pupils are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding. The governors are justifiably concerned that the information they publish about the use of this funding does not identify individual pupils. The chair of the governing body was very clear about how effectively the money is used, matched to each pupil's individual needs. Equally, the physical education and sport funding is spent well. Pupils talked enthusiastically and with pride about the range of sporting competitions they enter, and win.
- I heard pupils reading their work during visits to classes. The vast majority were confident and read fluently with meaning and understanding. Some pupils, whom you have clearly identified as needing additional support for their learning, struggled with work that required good reading skills. However, other pupils gave them considerate and thoughtful support so they did not struggle for too long.
- A strong feature of the school is the wealth of opportunities pupils have, both during the school day and out of school hours, from celebrating Diwali, meeting the Archbishop of York and, incredibly, shaking Tim Peake's hand at a recent event. These opportunities inspire and motivate pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- while governors continue to secure a viable future for the school, they establish a systematic approach to ensuring that they are meeting their statutory duty to publish information and keep policies up to date
- plans to develop the outdoor provision for children in the early years provision are completed and implemented to extend the range of learning opportunities
- leaders, including subject leaders, work to ensure that pupils' presentation of their work is always of a high standard
- subject leaders develop their skills in analysing the progress pupils make and understand the barriers to securing rapid progress
- leaders persist in developing approaches to teaching that ensure that as many pupils as possible make rapid progress and reach higher standards than those expected for their ages.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Hayter
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I planned the inspection so I could focus on the following:

- how well the headteacher, staff and governors had addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection
- how accurately children in the early years are assessed and how much progress they make
- how well pupils who need additional support for their learning are supported and whether they make good progress
- how effectively the governing body fulfils its statutory duties and challenges the headteacher to continue to develop the school
- the effectiveness of the arrangements to keep pupils safe.

During the inspection, I met with you and the subject leader for mathematics. I held a telephone conversation with the education adviser from the diocese of York and met with the representative of the local authority.

I talked with parents as they brought their children to school and talked with pupils both in lessons and at playtime.

Together, we visited all three classes and reviewed a substantial proportion of pupils' current books and their books from the last school year. I listened to several pupils read their work during visits to classrooms.

I reviewed the school's information about the progress that pupils make from the time they arrive in school, documents relating to the work of the governors and a wide range of documents covering other aspects of the school's work.

The number of pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is too small to report on separately.