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Mr Philip Searson
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Dear Mr Searson

Short inspection of Longford Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 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 November 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 are an inspirational and highly respected headteacher. You have created a culture at Longford Church of England Primary School which places the pupils at the heart of everything that the school does and the school at the heart of the community it serves. As a result of your very effective leadership, staff feel valued and have engaged fully with your vision, every parent who expressed a view would recommend the school to other parents and pupils told me that they are proud to attend the school.

The school's newsletter is entitled 'The Clock', in recognition of the clock on the front of the school building. This, alongside your deeply held belief in making time for everyone associated with the school, gave rise to your school motto, 'time to learn, time to care, time for fun', which weaves its way through the school like an invisible thread. Throughout the school, different clocks serve as a reminder of this. For example, one in the room where pupils attend assembly is made from compact discs and represents 'time to sing'.

Parents who expressed their views through the online survey, Parent View, or who spoke with me as they brought their children to school were full of praise for the way in which their children are looked after at the school. One parent summed up the views of many by saying, 'it's fantastic, the way they care...'. Every parent felt that their child was safe and happy at the school. Parents are welcomed into the

school on a regular basis. For example, during my visit, parents were being welcomed into classrooms for 'Open Response'. This is a regular and well-attended opportunity for parents to look at their children's books to see how well they are improving their work in response to feedback from their teachers.

You, the staff and the governors are keen for the school to be an important part of the local community. Pupils, staff and parents are involved in fundraising, for example for Macmillan cancer care, as part of harvest festival and pupils sing at the church's family service. Recently, you asked parents for the names of family members who had served in the armed forces. The names were read out as the whole school community prepared for a minute's silence during the remembrance service on 11 November, making this important event very relevant for the young pupils.

At the last inspection, inspectors asked you to ensure that feedback provides pupils with a clear indication of what they need to do to improve and to provide pupils with opportunities to check their own work and to contribute to planning their own learning. You have responded well to these areas for improvement. We saw in pupils' books the improvements and progress that they make over time and the opportunities that they have to reflect on their learning. Displays in classes, entitled 'The Wonder Wall', relate to the questions pupils 'wonder' about when they start a new topic of work. Teachers include the pupils' questions when they plan the learning. For example, in one classroom, the 'Wonder Wall' for a topic about the Titanic included questions such as 'How long did it take to sink?', which was surrounded by writing and photographs of pupils completing work to help them find out the answer.

You have ensured that pupils can play an active part in the day-to-day running of the school. Pupils told me that they enjoy the opportunities that they have to take responsibility in school. The 'Lunch bunch' help their younger friends at lunchtime and the 'Eco-Council' is organising a 'switch-off fortnight' to save energy. Pupils can nominate their classmates for the much-prized 'sparklers' awards, which are given out during assembly to pupils who have demonstrated positive behaviour or kindness.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at Longford Church of England Primary School. All of the appropriate vetting checks take place when a new member of staff joins the school. Staff and governors have all undertaken the relevant training and are familiar with the up-to-date guidance. Staff, at all levels, can describe clearly how they would raise a concern about a pupil's welfare, should one arise. Your record-keeping is very well organised and records are kept securely. You have forged effective relationships with parents and external agencies to ensure that pupils and families can receive good support, if they need it.

Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe. They enjoy visits from the fire service to teach them about fire safety, for example. Pupils are able to describe, in

a way that is appropriate for their age, how to keep themselves safe when they are using modern technology.

Inspection findings

- You are providing excellent leadership by establishing high expectations, which are clearly understood by staff and governors alike.
- You have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement across the school. Ably supported by your deputy headteacher, you undertake a rigorous schedule of monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and of the progress that pupils are making. This is enabling you to bring about improvements in all aspects of school life continually.
- Governors are ambitious for the pupils to do well. They provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge to you. They attend staff meetings, when they are invited to do so, to train alongside staff and, as part of this training, experience monitoring activities, such as scrutinising pupils' work. This has helped them to be able to ask challenging questions of leaders about the impact of improvements that have been implemented.
- Governors have formed a 'governance committee'. This provides an additional layer of accountability, as governors scrutinise the effectiveness of their own work in holding leaders to account.
- The leadership of some subjects is well established; however, due to recent changes in staffing, leadership of some subjects is still in its infancy. You have provided these leaders with training, so that they can undertake their roles effectively. They are now well placed to be able fully to undertake their responsibilities for themselves and to contribute to improvements in teaching, learning and standards generally across the school.
- You have recently reviewed the teaching of mathematics across the school. In lessons, we saw pupils solving mathematics problems using the calculation skills that they have learned recently. Pupils' books showed that they are building upon previous skills, knowledge and understanding in a logical way. There is now scope to increase the opportunities pupils have to develop their mathematical reasoning skills further.
- Outcomes for pupils are strong. You and your staff track the progress that individual pupils make throughout the school year in order to ensure that you intervene quickly, so that pupils do not fall behind.
- When they read, pupils at the early stages of reading make good use of their developing understanding of the sounds that letters represent and other cues, such as looking at an accompanying picture, to help them make sense of the text. As they become confident readers, pupils develop strong opinions about the types of books that they enjoy reading. Pupils told me that they have plenty of opportunities to read in school.

- During our tour of lessons, pupils were able to explain what they were learning and how they were using the skills or knowledge they had previously developed.
- Teaching assistants were deployed effectively and supported pupils well, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They used questions and gentle encouragement to ensure that the pupils they were supporting were able to learn and make good progress.
- You have very clear systems in place to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive the support they need in order to make good progress. You involve parents in planning the spending of the pupil premium funding and review the impact of the spending regularly, to make sure that it is having the impact that is intended.
- In lessons and through looking at pupils' books, we could see that the most able pupils are provided with additional challenges and a higher level of expectation in lessons. We also saw that the expectations were sometimes less challenging than appropriate and teachers did not step in promptly to ensure that, when pupils are ready to move on to something more challenging, they do so without delay and make the best possible progress.
- Pupils behave very well in and around school. They are polite and courteous to each other, staff and visitors alike.
- Pupils believe that bullying and name-calling are very rare, but they are confident that if it ever did happen, an adult would deal with it for them.
- Pupils enjoy the rewards that they receive in assembly, particularly the 'sparklers' and the 'peacock award'.
- Our scrutiny of pupils' books highlighted how pupils take great care to present their work neatly. This reflects the high expectations that teachers have of presentation and indicates that pupils take pride in their work.
- You are a designated local leader of education, providing support for seven other schools to help them to improve. This has led to your outward-looking approach to school improvement at Longford Church of England Primary School.
- The forging of close links with other schools has enabled your staff to share good practice and to work alongside colleagues from other schools. In this way, they moderate their judgements and ensure that they are accurate in their assessments of pupils' work.
- The local authority has provided a low level of support for the school because it has confidence in the school's leadership and the outcomes for pupils.
- The school does not meet requirements for the publication of specified information on its website. This is because you have recently updated your website and the moving of information from the old website to the new one is not yet complete.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers step in promptly when they notice that pupils, including the most able, are ready to move on to the next step of learning
- teachers provide pupils with more opportunities to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics
- middle leaders develop their skills fully, so that they can be held to account for improvements in their areas of responsibility.

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

Yours sincerely

Di Mullan

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke with you, three other leaders and three other members of staff. I met with five members of the board of governors, including the chair, and with a representative of the local authority. I spoke with several parents as they brought their children to school and considered the views parents expressed through the online survey, Parent View. I also considered the views of seven members of staff through their online survey. There were no responses to the pupils' survey, but I met with four pupils, heard two pupils reading and spoke with pupils as you and I undertook a tour of the school to see the learning that was taking place in every class. I scrutinised pupils' books and documents relating to pupils' progress, school improvement, self-evaluation and safeguarding, including the school's single central record.

This short inspection focused particularly on whether leaders had responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection, whether the most able pupils and the small number of disadvantaged pupils are supported appropriately and challenged to achieve the standards of which they are capable, and whether safeguarding is effective.