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9 March 2017

Ms Melody Nicholls  
Headteacher  
Lamerton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
Lamerton  
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Dear Ms Nicholls

### **Short inspection of Lamerton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 28 February 2017, 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 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. This is an inclusive and welcoming school, where pupils of all abilities, needs and backgrounds are helped to succeed. Leaders and governors are rightly proud of the quality of support provided for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Although situated in a small village on the fringe of Dartmoor National Park, families from further afield choose the school because of the reputation of its work with this group of children. Parents greatly value the support and encouragement that helps pupils to achieve and thrive – reflecting the school's vision of 'Dream it, believe it, achieve it'.

You and your staff are working hard to improve the school, and have successfully tackled many of the recommendations from the previous inspection. You have fostered a culture where leaders, staff and governors reflect on what works well and what could be improved further. As a small school, you place great value on collaboration and learning from others. You have used links through the federation and with the Moorland Schools Partnership to improve teaching and the curriculum and to provide greater opportunities for pupils.

During this short inspection, I focused on a small number of key areas of the school's work. Firstly, we agreed to look at how teaching and the curriculum are arranged to meet the needs of pupils in mixed-aged classes. Secondly, we decided to evaluate the impact of leaders and staff on improving teaching, including through

links with other schools. We also agreed to look at the impact of the work of the school in helping pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to succeed and to achieve well. Lastly, we decided to consider how well the governing body supports and challenges the school to improve the quality of its work.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You place great importance on pupils' welfare, well-being and safety. The school is a safe and secure place for children to learn. All statutory policies and procedures are in place and are rigorously followed. This includes making sure that staff recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and fully up to date. Risk assessments are carefully completed and closely followed, including when pupils and staff walk to use the playing fields near the village hall.

Staff have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities to keep children safe, and to report any concerns. This is underpinned by detailed record keeping and an assiduous approach to following up issues or referrals made. Pupils are confident that adults will listen to them about their worries or concerns. Attendance is rising and very few pupils are persistently absent from school.

### **Inspection findings**

- Teaching and the curriculum are usually adjusted well to meet the needs of pupils, including those who need extra support, as well as the most able. This helps pupils to make good progress across the curriculum. However, pupils are not always challenged as much as they could be. For example, some pupils in Year 6 said that sometimes their work was not different enough from work they had done in Year 5. However, leaders' checks are effective in pinpointing when this happens and in providing feedback to staff.
- The use of assessment is a strong feature of the school's work. This reflects a culture where information is not collected and analysed for its own sake, but is used to ensure that pupils receive the support they need, and to improve teaching and the curriculum. A good example of this is your detailed review of pupils' responses in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Staff use this information to plan support for weaker readers, as well as reflecting on how the teaching of phonics can be improved. Feedback to pupils helps them to learn from their mistakes and understand how to improve. However, you recognise that, at times, the impact of overly detailed and lengthy marking may be limited.
- You have developed your own approach to checking pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. This has proved very helpful in identifying strong practice, as well as aspects that need further improvement, such as in modern foreign languages and in PE. Where there is effective practice in other schools, such as at your partner school in the federation, you make sure this is shared effectively with staff at Lamerton.
- Teaching and the curriculum in mathematics are effective in helping pupils apply their skills and knowledge, particularly when tackling calculations and number problems. It is sometimes less successful in developing pupils' conceptual

understanding, or their ability to think about and solve problems for themselves. This means that pupils are not as confident in mathematical reasoning as they are in applying the techniques they have learned. Through your own checks, you have rightly identified this as an area for further development.

- Your school has an unusually high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is in part because the school is recognised for its effectiveness in supporting pupils' personal, social, emotional and academic development. The school caters well for the diverse needs of pupils and makes sure the curriculum and teaching are adapted so pupils make good progress. Assessment information is used effectively to help identify where pupils would benefit from additional support. Parents value the communication they have with school and the way the school advocates on behalf of their children.
- Governors are fully involved in the life of the school and are committed to its success. They bring a good range of expertise and experience. They make use of support and training where this is needed. They take a keen interest in matters such as safeguarding, and staff well-being and workload. You work closely with governors to help them support and challenge the school.
- Governors play a full part in setting the strategic direction for the school and for the federation. This includes scrutinising school improvement planning and working with you to identify priorities and areas for development. However, improvement priorities are not linked to measurable targets and interim checkpoints. This means that governors are less able to understand whether leaders' actions are having enough impact in improving the school.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- further develop the curriculum and teaching in mathematics to improve pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills
- strengthen school improvement planning by ensuring that school priorities are linked to measurable targets and milestones.

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

Yours sincerely

Lee Northern  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I held discussions with you and with a small group of staff at the school. I looked at your school improvement planning, records of the checks on teaching and your school self-evaluation summary. I scrutinised safeguarding records and we discussed a wide range of matters related to pupils' safety, well-being and welfare. Together, we visited classes where we also looked at examples of pupils' work. I met with four governors and scrutinised recent minutes of meetings of the governing body. I also met with some children from Years 4, 5 and 6 to hear their views about their experiences of school. I also met informally with other pupils at different times. I considered the responses to the online questionnaire Parent View and spoke with a small number of parents at the start of the school day.