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Mrs Wendy Wakefield
Headteacher
Loughborough Church of England Primary School
William Street
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Dear Mrs Wakefield

Short inspection of Loughborough Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 May 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 your predecessor 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.

You, the governors and the senior leadership team have worked hard to create a calm, harmonious learning environment where pupils are conscientious and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Your core values of peace, compassion, justice, forgiveness, respect and perseverance shine through in all aspects of the school's work. Relationships between pupils and adults are very strong. Parents and pupils are both overwhelmingly positive in their views of the school. One parent told me that the school 'is like one big happy family'.

Pupils welcome the opportunity to take part in a variety of extra-curricular activities and clubs, including tennis, hockey, film, netball, baseball and handbells. Year 3 pupils particularly enjoyed the residential visit to Beaumanor Hall and the Year 6 class are looking forward to the upcoming week-long visit to Tregoyd House.

At the last inspection, you were asked to ensure that adults in key stage 1 corrected the size and position of pupils' handwriting and that children in the Reception class had a specific outdoor area to enhance their physical development. Presentation of pupils' work is now a strength. Pupils throughout the school are developing a cursive style that is allowing letters to be joined together neatly. The outdoor area in the early years has been developed well. There is now a canopy, a mud kitchen, a garden and a designated area for children to use scooters and bicycles. Finally,

the inspector asked you to develop the skills of teaching assistants so that their work is consistently effective. You have ensured that teaching assistants have extra time every day to liaise with class teachers regarding lesson planning, assessment and pupils' progress. Teaching assistants have also undergone relevant training in, for example, emotional literacy, bereavement and developing pupils' social skills.

The knowledgeable governing body offers a good range of skills and experience to help support your work in improving the school. Governors ask challenging questions at meetings and undertake relevant training in such areas as special educational needs, finance and safeguarding. They make visits to check on specific areas of the school and report these findings back to other governors. For example, a governor recently carried out a health and safety audit. This helped to identify strengths at the school and areas that required some development.

The Loughborough Primary Academy Partnership (LPAP) offers strong support to the school. You, subject leaders, teachers and support staff meet frequently with your counterparts from across the partnership to discuss wide-ranging issues relevant to your roles. One important aspect of this partnership is the moderation of pupils' work. This helps to ensure that judgements teachers are making regarding pupils' attainment and progress are accurate.

You have a robust system in place for the tracking and assessment of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress meetings are held termly with teachers in order for any pupil who is falling behind to be identified and quickly given the help they need in order to catch up. Teachers and teaching assistants keep pupil intervention records to ensure that any extra support a child is receiving is documented clearly. You are aware that science and the foundation subjects need to be monitored more closely.

In the 2016 tests, by the end of key stage 2, pupils had made better progress than other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics, although this was not the case in writing. By the end of key stage 1, pupils had achieved in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics at both the expected and higher levels. Children in the early years and those in Year 1 achieved slightly below national averages at a good level of development and in the Year 1 phonics screening check, respectively.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture within the school. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. There is a robust system in place for staff to record any concerns they may have regarding a pupil's welfare or safety. If these concerns require outside agency involvement, then referrals are made swiftly. You are tenacious in ensuring that pupils and their families receive extra support should they require it. You know individual pupils and their families very well, with one parent commenting that your 'door is always open'.

Checks made on adults working and volunteering at the school are rigorous and

your single central record meets all statutory requirements. Pupils I spoke with all said that they felt safe and that they knew an adult they could talk to should they have a concern. Pupils have a good understanding of online safety, including the potential dangers of social media.

Pupils told me that instances of bullying are extremely rare and that behaviour is good when in the classroom and when playing outside at break and lunchtimes. They enjoy receiving house points for a variety of reasons, including good work, showing good manners and being kind to others. The 'tree of celebration' also looks to reward pupils who are making a positive contribution to school life.

Inspection findings

- Current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are making good progress in writing. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to practise spelling, punctuation and grammar skills. For example, in Year 6, pupils had been working accurately to identify nouns, proper nouns, abstract nouns and pronouns in different sentences. These skills are then applied effectively to extended pieces of writing.
- Pupils enjoy reading at school and at home. Reading books are at the appropriate level of challenge and younger pupils try to use phonics knowledge and skills to read unfamiliar words, although this is not always successful. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors, including Roald Dahl and David Walliams.
- You have strong systems in place to monitor pupils' attendance. Monthly checks are made on individual pupil's attendance levels and letters are sent to parents should a pupil's attendance become a cause for concern. Currently, rates of attendance and persistent absence for pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are in line with national averages.
- The teaching of phonics is not as effective as it should be and phonics sessions do not always engage and motivate pupils. Teachers do not always correct misconceptions and errors when pupils are writing words onto whiteboards.
- Action plans, at all levels, do not always contain appropriate monitoring opportunities and milestones. Consequently, governors cannot hold leaders fully accountable for the impact of their improvement strategies because it is not clear who is checking the plan and when specific actions are to be completed.
- The school does not currently have effective systems for evaluating how well pupils are learning in science and the foundation subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- action plans at all levels contain relevant milestones and monitoring opportunities so that governors are able to hold leaders fully to account for the impact of their improvement strategies
- subject leaders are clear about the quality of learning in science and the foundation subjects
- staff receive appropriate support and training in the teaching and assessment of phonics so that standards rise to be above the national figure in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Stonier
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the assistant headteacher responsible for assessment and mathematics. I also met with the assistant headteacher responsible for English, the special educational needs leader, a representative from LPAP and four representatives of the governing body, including the vice-chair. I considered 16 responses by parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. There were no responses by staff and pupils to their respective Ofsted online questionnaires. We visited all classrooms, where I spoke with pupils and examined their books. I viewed a range of documents, including your evaluation of the school's current performance, school improvement and subject plans, safeguarding records, governor minutes, teacher appraisal documents and information relating to attendance. I examined the school's website to check that it complies with the Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and met with a group of them after lunch. I listened to a group of pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read and scrutinised a sample of English, mathematics and topic books from pupils in every year group.