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Rick Holroyd
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Dear Mr Holroyd

Short inspection of Langtree School

Following my visit to the school on 10 May 2017 with Ofsted Inspector Helen Pennington, 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 June 2013.

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 passionate about the school and, under your skilful leadership, it has moved even further forward. The strengths highlighted in the previous inspection report have been maintained and you have built upon them effectively to develop other excellent features. This improvement reflects the strong support you receive from senior and middle leaders, all of whom know the school well and share your ambitions. Middle leaders are a strong and cohesive group who make a valuable contribution to the school. They greatly appreciate the opportunities you give them to develop their ideas and to be involved in decision-making. Teachers and support staff are dedicated to making Langtree School an even better place in which young people can learn well.

Governors are committed and loyal to the school and have a useful range of professional skills. There have been some helpful recent appointments to the governing body and these governors are enthusiastic about developing their new roles. Governors' commitment ensures that they increasingly spend time in school and work closely with school leaders. However, governors recognise that they can make better use of this time to develop a deeper understanding of the school's performance in order to challenge leaders more robustly.

Pupils are a delight to meet and talk with, and they fully reflect the school's core values of courtesy, tolerance and respect. There is a welcoming, vibrant and creative atmosphere which permeates the school, characterised by very positive relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils themselves. Inspectors saw excellent pupil behaviour in lessons and around the school, and many examples of pupils working harmoniously together. Pupils greatly value the efforts that teachers make for them and the support and encouragement they are given. Many parents reflect this view, with one saying: 'Langtree is a wonderful, supportive community, as well as an excellent school, with teachers who are passionate about their subjects and about education.'

The majority of pupils currently in the school make very strong progress across a wide range of subjects because teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good and often better. This is because, since the last inspection, you have focused particularly on developing teachers' expertise through a strong emphasis on professional training. The coaching and leadership development programmes have been especially effective in this regard. As one member of staff said: 'The development of teaching and learning and the focus on progress and ensuring that every child achieves their best have been transformational over the past few years.' However, you recognise that there is more work to do to ensure that some lower-attaining pupils and some who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make even faster progress.

Your systems for tracking pupils' progress are clear and well thought out. Where pupils are at risk of falling behind, individual support is put in place promptly. Pupils are provided with helpful feedback from teachers, which enables them to make further progress. However, the advice and guidance teachers give to pupils about how to improve their work are not yet consistently effective.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements and records meet statutory requirements and are fit for purpose. Staff training is comprehensive and effective.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for at school. Safeguarding is given a high priority and arrangements are well led and managed. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through an effective assembly programme and relevant personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils told inspectors that they know who to go to if they have a problem and they particularly value the work of their form tutors and year leaders in this regard. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that they have every confidence in school staff to deal with it effectively if it occurs.

Governors fully understand their role in monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. Recent additions to the governing body have meant that some safeguarding training for new governors has been a little delayed, but this is now being addressed.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we agreed that we would look at pupils' progress across subjects, particularly the progress of disadvantaged pupils. This is an aspect of the school that you identify as an ongoing focus.
- Improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is rightly a high priority in the school. Staff are fully aware of who these pupils are and monitor their learning and progress closely. School leaders use pupil premium funding effectively to provide well-targeted support for disadvantaged pupils, including additional teaching. In addition, disadvantaged pupils' pastoral needs are regularly monitored and interventions are put in place where needed. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress. This was reflected in the 2016 GCSE results, where disadvantaged pupils made more progress than the national average.
- We also agreed to look at the quality of teaching overall, and especially how this was having an impact on the progress of lower-attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- In most cases, the teaching across a wide range of subjects secures strong progress for the majority of pupils. Pupils are quick to do what is asked of them and their level of engagement is generally high. Some excellent examples were seen of teachers' use of effective questioning to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. The school's focus on developing pupils' literacy skills is proving particularly effective in supporting the progress of lower-attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- However, some lower-attaining pupils and some who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not making progress as quickly as their peers because work is not routinely matched to their particular needs. In the parts of lessons seen, the same work was often given to all pupils, regardless of their starting points.
- Another aspect of the school's work that we considered was the level of pupils' attendance, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The large majority of pupils attend school regularly and overall attendance is in line with the national average. Pastoral leaders know well which pupils do not attend school regularly enough and do their best to support vulnerable families. They check up regularly when pupils are not in school, which ensures that pupils are kept safe. Pastoral leaders use an extensive range of relevant strategies to help pupils attend school more regularly. School leaders know their pupils very well and work hard to overcome the barriers that are preventing pupils from attending school. However, some disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are missing school too frequently, which is hampering their learning and progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more lower-attaining pupils, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make accelerated progress
- where necessary, pupils' attendance improves further
- governors develop a deeper understanding of the school's effectiveness, and challenge leaders more robustly.

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

Yours sincerely

Paula Sargent
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, your leadership team, middle leaders and staff responsible for attendance. I also met five members of the governing body, including the chair and the vice-chair. We met pupils in all year groups informally in lessons and a range of pupils in a formal meeting in which we discussed their learning and views on school life. We visited learning across a range of subjects and year groups together with members of the leadership team. One inspector attended an assembly.

Inspectors also carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work in their books. We looked at a range of school documentation including current assessment information, the school's improvement plan, leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, attendance information for current pupils and minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors considered the 100 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire, the 59 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire, the 124 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, the 124 written comments by parents and two emails sent by parents to the inspection team.