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Mr Chris Tay
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Tay

Short inspection of Longden Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 November 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 September 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, other leaders and governors have worked with determination and commitment to make sure that the school has continued to move forwards and build on its strengths. You have built on your reputation in the community, and many pupils come from outside of the locality. Parents who spoke to me and replied to the online questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. The effective Nursery provision has increased numbers in the school and ensured that there is good transition into the Reception class. As a result, outcomes in the early years have improved to above the national average by the end of the key stage. One parent told me, 'The Nursery is amazing and a great addition to the school. There is lots of integration into the school for the Nursery children.'

You and other leaders have a secure understanding of what is working well and know where further work is needed. For example, your actions taken to improve outcomes in mathematics, and English, grammar and punctuation resulted in above-average attainment overall at the end of Year 6 in 2017. Your evaluation of the school's performance is accurate, and the key lines of enquiry for this inspection and the improvements needed in key stage 1 and those associated with writing came as no surprise to you. Governors are knowledgeable about the strengths of the school and the areas for development. Governors provide leaders with a good balance of challenge and support. They monitor the work of the school, checking

that actions taken have the desired outcome. All staff who responded to the staff survey unanimously agreed that the school has improved since the last inspection and they are proud to work in the school.

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to plan lessons which are well paced and ensure appropriate challenge within each mixed-ability class. During the inspection, there was a good pace to the lessons. Since the last inspection, you have organised a fifth class. The Reception and Year 1 pupils are now taught in separate year groups. During this inspection, pupils in mixed-age classes were offered appropriate work for their abilities.

Pupils are enthusiastic and well behaved. Pupils enjoy school, which is reflected in their above-average attendance rates. The school is a warm, open and friendly place. Parents who spoke to me at the start of the day and those who commented online were unanimous in saying that their children are happy and enjoy school. They say that this is because you and the staff know each and every child well. Parents of children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are very grateful for the support given to their children and acknowledge the progress their children make from their individual starting points. A typical parental comment was, 'The school is unique, and the staff know what makes all children tick, from those with special educational needs to those who are high achieving.' Parents also said that they feel welcome in the school and say that they can raise matters with you or other staff members at any time.

The wider curriculum is organised in imaginative ways and this is much appreciated by pupils and parents. The curriculum excites pupils' curiosity and enthusiasm and is enhanced by a wide range of trips and visitors to the school. Pupils were very keen to tell me about a recent visit from a local beekeeper who brought a beehive into school. Older pupils also spoke to me about a memorable trip to the theatre in Stratford to see 'The Tempest'. You offer a wide range of clubs and activities which contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education effectively. You have ensured that sport is a particular strength of the school, and pupils have many opportunities to participate in a range of sports. Pupils have had a good deal of success in competitions, such as in the English Indoor Rowing Championships in Manchester.

Safeguarding is effective.

You place a high priority on safeguarding. Staff know the pupils well, and because of the updates they receive, they understand the risks posed to pupils. Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are of a good quality. Appropriate checks are made when staff are recruited, and staff training is up to date. You communicate effectively with outside agencies when the need arises.

Pupils feel safe in school. All parents who replied to the online questionnaire, Parent View, believe that their child is well cared for at school. Bullying rarely occurs, but pupils have great confidence in their teachers to deal with any fallings out. The curriculum helps pupils to develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves

safe in a range of situations. Pupils are able to avoid the risks of using the internet because they have been given good advice.

Inspection findings

- You provide strong leadership and have a precise understanding of the school's current performance. You are ambitious and hold high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Leaders' views on the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils are accurate. Leaders provide staff with clear guidance on how to improve their practice. Furthermore, leaders' analysis notes the impact teaching is having on outcomes for pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- You are rightly focusing on improving the attainment of pupils in reading and writing at key stage 1. You have taken action to ensure that the Reception children and Year 1 pupils are now taught in separate classes. On visiting classrooms and hearing pupils read, it was clear that the steps you have taken to improve progress and attainment in phonics are having a positive impact. Pupils are writing regularly, in a range of genres, and developing writing stamina. There is scope, however, to improve teaching further by providing more challenge so that a higher proportion of pupils make accelerated progress. You have also identified that some pupils are not forming their letters correctly.
- In the 2017 end of key stage 2 tests, pupils' progress in writing was not as strong as in reading and mathematics. Evidence from my observations and work in pupils' books, including the work of boys, show that pupils are writing regularly. Pupils are able to identify key features of texts and write extended pieces of writing in a range of genres. Pupils have a good understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling. You have correctly identified that pupils now need to improve their writing by applying their good knowledge of grammar and punctuation to their extended pieces of writing. Some pupils also need to ensure that they write in a neat handwriting style.
- You recognise that some Year 3 and 4 pupils need to catch up with the basic skills they need to make progress. As a result, you carefully assess pupils' gaps in learning, putting into place the necessary support and interventions to allow these pupils to make good progress. You regularly review the impact of this support and change the intervention if it is not working well enough. You are the special educational needs coordinator. In some year groups, you have a high proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. You run a very inclusive school, and some parents move their children to the school during the primary years because of the attention given to individual needs. These pupils thrive within the school community.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff accelerate progress further in reading and writing at key stage 1 by providing more challenge for pupils

- pupils, including those in key stage 2, are supported to use and apply their grammar and punctuation knowledge in extended pieces of writing and are encouraged to develop neater handwriting.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Somers
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, five governors and a representative from the local authority. I observed pupils learning in lessons and looked at examples of pupils' work. I met with a group of pupils and spoke with other pupils during lessons. I scrutinised a variety of documents, including the school's development plan, the school's own evaluation of its performance and records of checks made on the suitability of staff to work with children. I took account of responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire from 74 parents and carers, 45 pupils and 13 staff.