

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



27 June 2018

Mrs Lea Mason  
Executive Headteacher  
The Horncastle St Lawrence School  
Bowl Alley Lane  
Horncastle  
Lincolnshire  
LN9 5EJ

Dear Mrs Mason

### **Short inspection of The Horncastle St Lawrence School**

Following my visit to the school on 5 June 2018 with Heather Hawkes, Ofsted Inspector, 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 October 2014.

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

The school community has experienced temporary changes in the leadership team over the past year. This has brought its own challenges. The school is now in a position to ensure that identified school improvement targets are swiftly tackled.

You have gradually made changes to the curriculum over the last three years. These were implemented in order to best meet the individual needs of the pupils. The curriculum is now having a positive impact on the learning of pupils.

You and the recently promoted leadership team have created a positive and caring school. Pupils' individual needs are well met and this contributes to their strong personal development and academic progress. A resilient staff team has been instrumental in moving the school forward. Pupils are encouraged and enabled to achieve well and to make strong progress from their starting points.

Pupils' personal development is a particular strength of the school. They behave well and their relationships with adults are excellent. Pupils' needs are very carefully considered on an individual basis. Pupils have access to a firmly established rural activities area. This provides a calming and therapeutic area at all times if they feel worried about anything. They also gain valuable life skills and qualifications in learning about horticulture and animal care. This has helped to boost pupils' self-esteem and increased their range of skills in caring for animals, such as following instructions in order to independently feed small animals.

You have ensured that previous areas for improvement have been fully addressed. Leaders and governors have ensured that initiatives have fully impacted on learning. You have done this by empowering middle leaders with appropriate training and support. This has helped staff to support pupils effectively with their learning. Staff are given many opportunities for further development, and the executive headteacher is very adept at spotting and nurturing potential leaders in school. For example, a current teacher has undergone in-house training in order to become a middle leader in the school, and so helping to drive up standards.

Parents and carers consider that pupils are taught well and that the school is well managed. They recognise the nurturing environment the school has successfully created for pupils. Inspectors noted the calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders are proactive in creating a culture of safeguarding. Recruitment procedures are comprehensive and safe. As part of safer recruitment, checks are carried out in line with the school's policy for safeguarding. Safeguarding roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined around the school and safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff training logs are up to date and reflect the needs of pupils. Leaders have ensured that staff explain what to do in the event of raising a safeguarding concern. Referrals are acted upon in a timely manner, with action taken in line with policy guidelines.

The strength of relationships between staff and pupils cannot be underestimated. Pupils are encouraged to be independent learners, and at the breakfast club, they made their own toast. Pupils address staff in a polite manner and with respect. Politeness and good manners are encouraged at all times by staff.

Pupils' attendance is closely monitored. This includes the use home checks as part of a comprehensive system, which are carried out according to the school's policy.

### **Inspection findings**

- Middle leaders have been empowered to improve the quality of teaching and learning. They have had training in order to develop and refine their teaching. They understand that the collaborative approach taken is a significant strength of the school's staff. They are aware of the strengths and areas for improvement across the curriculum and have taken steps towards improving teaching in English and mathematics. You have successfully encouraged middle leaders to take genuine responsibility for pupils' progress through clear monitoring of targets over time. Staff feel well supported in school and appreciate the mindfulness and well-being initiatives which have been introduced. The strong team ethos has contributed to the school's improvement.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils' progress is closely monitored. Pupils have made good progress as a result. Older pupils self-assess effectively and are aware of what they need to do next in order to improve their work. Leaders

ensure that pupils receive effective feedback. Pupils are encouraged to think and work independently, so developing enquiring minds.

- Leaders ensure that all pupils achieve well regardless of their starting points or if they are disadvantaged. Leaders ensure that the tracking of pupils' progress is accurate and shared with the governing body at regular intervals. Learning is personalised for all pupils, with a strong emphasis on meeting their social and emotional needs.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils' targets are regularly reviewed throughout the academic year. Targets are shared with pupils and parents, who have input into progress and next steps. Teachers provide detailed feedback to pupils on how well they have done against their targets in their education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- Pupils are made aware of a culturally diverse modern Britain, including expanding their knowledge of other cultures. A school newspaper is used for pupils to develop an understanding of autistic spectrum disorder. The school has been awarded an international schools award this year, in recognition of the many opportunities afforded to pupils. The school is outward facing, with many strong and meaningful partnerships within the local community and beyond. Leaders listen closely to the student council in order to give pupils a genuine voice in school.
- Leaders have been successful in creating a positive culture among staff. Leaders are passionate about enabling pupils to maximise their potential. Staff make creative use of resources in order to support the curriculum. This ensures that pupils are in receipt of a highly personalised curriculum.
- Governors take their role seriously and are passionate about promoting the best provision possible for pupils. They are very clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses and are keen to improve facilities in order to build on the school's existing strengths. Governors are committed to securing the best outcomes for pupils and use varied and effective systems to check on the performance of the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- further refine the newly introduced system to help pupils of all abilities make strong progress
- ensure that the most able pupils are consistently challenged to achieve their potential across a range of subjects
- develop key stages 1 and 2 in order to strengthen provision.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jason Brooks  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, the executive headteacher, the assistant headteacher, and middle leaders, including leaders for English and mathematics. Inspectors held meetings with small groups of teachers and support staff. They observed learning throughout the school with leaders and reviewed pupils' work and communicated with pupils. Inspectors met with the chair of the trust and members of the governing body. They spoke with pupils. The lead inspector checked records with the assistant headteacher and human resources lead, and reviewed procedures about keeping children safe. Inspectors studied the school development plan and the school's self-evaluation. The lead inspector considered the views of 42 parents who replied to the school's survey, because there were insufficient responses to Parent View to be taken into account.