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Mrs J Dawda
Headteacher
Long Clawson Church of England Primary School
Long Clawson
Melton Mowbray
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Dear Mrs Dawda

Short inspection of Long Clawson Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 November 2018, 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 good in January 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in August 2017, you have effectively built upon the strengths of the school, communicating a clear vision for continuous improvement. Your calm, purposeful and determined leadership has resulted in a cohesive school team. The pupils' needs are at the heart of all you do, providing them with a well-rounded education in a nurturing environment.

You know the school well and have successfully led improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Staff and governors value your good work. Parents and carers express high levels of satisfaction and comment on how kind and approachable you and the staff are. One parent stated, 'The teachers are brilliant and really bring learning to life.' Pupils certainly enjoy coming to school. This is evident in their high rates of attendance and in the way that they happily arrive at school in the morning. Some of the younger pupils literally skipped in to meet their friends.

You have accurately evaluated the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders have a clear plan for improvement and work effectively to raise standards. You make frequent checks on the quality of teaching and provide training and support for staff where needed. You ensure that any weaknesses are rigorously addressed, and you hold teachers to account for the progress their pupils are making. This sharp focus on securing good-quality teaching throughout the school is having a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Pupils' outcomes at key stage 2 show some variability in comparison with national averages, according to published information.

In 2017, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics was broadly in line with national averages but below for writing. There were improvements in pupils' key stage 2 writing outcomes in 2018. While most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make good progress in their writing, there remain inconsistencies in pupils' attainment in writing across the school. Similarly, not all the children are making good progress from their starting points in the early years. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in early years has been below the national average for the past two years.

The teaching of reading is a strength across the whole school. Pupils told me about their love of books and spoke animatedly about a wide range of literature. Year 1 pupils read their books confidently, using their phonics skills to decipher more challenging words. Year 6 pupils spoke with both intelligence and emotion about books written by the author Michael Morpurgo which they had read, including 'Private Peaceful', 'War Horse' and 'Running Wild'. One pupil recalled, 'It was so eerie when the elephant in 'Running Wild' instinctively refused to go to the sea and suddenly charges off with Will on her back, and that's when the tsunami came.'

You and the team have developed the curriculum thoughtfully. It is broad and balanced and inspires pupils to learn. It provides engaging topics and places a high emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. Fundamental British values are threaded through all aspects of school life, promoting tolerance, respect and kindness. This was evident on the school's 'Remembrance Day', when pupils' thoughts and feelings were shared through art and poetry. Pupils enjoy music, including their violin lessons. Sport is a significant part of the curriculum, including swimming, and pupils in Year 1 and Years 5 and 6 enjoy taking part in a residential trip. Staff promote a positive ethos with bright, inviting displays, in and around the classroom. Parents frequently come into school to attend events such as the open evenings, assemblies and the forthcoming nativity.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development remain a strength of the school. They are polite, well-mannered and have a lovely sense of fun. Pupils are very proud of their school and were keen to tell me about how they enjoy their learning, especially topic work, physical education, and the many exciting clubs they join. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and enjoy homework projects. Some pupils had made beautifully detailed models of the trenches in the First World War, linking in with their topic on 'Private Peaceful'. Older pupils like helping the younger ones; for example, Year 5 pupils pair up as buddies to the early years children to support them at lunchtimes.

Pupils told me that they are very happy at this school. They say bullying is rare and parents agree. Pupils feel safe and know that if there is a problem, they can trust adults to listen to them and help. Pupils who I spoke with explained how they stay safe online and how to reduce the risks of being injured by fire. They had a good understanding about keeping healthy and told me how they start their day with a one-mile run, with some of the older pupils beating the mile and going further!

Members of the governing body are highly committed to the school and work hard to promote its unique vision and ethos. They know the school well and have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They achieve this through analysis of pupils' performance data, a range of leadership reports, carrying out monitoring visits to the school, and meetings with school leaders and staff. They are determined that any areas of weakness are addressed. Governors have rigorous monitoring systems in place to hold leaders to account and ensure that standards are continuously improving.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and the governing body have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The safeguarding and the well-being of pupils are of the utmost priority. Effective training for staff is in place and leaders are aware of the latest safeguarding guidance. Records are detailed and secure. Leaders and other staff know individual pupils and families well. They liaise with external agencies and actively seek help for families. Parents said they feel able to talk with you or other members of staff if they have a concern. One parent, recounting how their child had settled well after some difficulties, commented, 'It was all the small changes they made that made a huge difference to my child's success.'

Inspection findings

- Pupils' achievement in writing has presented an inconsistent picture across the school. You have swiftly identified areas of underperformance and implemented strategies which are beginning to have a positive impact. Pupils' outcomes have improved this year in key stage 2, but inconsistencies remain across the school. When we observed learning, we saw all teachers using engaging, quality literature as a stimulus for pupils' writing. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 were using 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes to complete well-planned activities that matched their abilities to develop their writing. Pupils showed me confidently how certain grammatical features in the text made the poem so effective. When looking at work in lessons and reviewing pupils' work in books we agreed that teachers do not always consistently plan opportunities for pupils to do longer pieces of writing.
- Leaders analyse the progress of individual pupils closely. Pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points. Leaders are highly skilled and passionate about inclusion. They work in strong partnership with parents and outside agencies to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum.
- You have built the capacity of subject leaders through training and support to increase their knowledge and skills. However, there is further work to be done. Subject leaders have a strong team ethos and are highly committed. They understand their role well and are determined to raise standards but do not yet rigorously evaluate the impact of their work.
- In the early years, leaders have identified that not all pupils are making good progress from their starting points. You are implementing a range of actions to improve standards. When we visited early years, we observed children enjoying

counting out tickets to go to the nativity play in the 'box office'. Other children were carefully cutting out shapes from playdough while a small group were happily engaged in guided writing, in which they were taking pride. We observed other planned activities that were not as meaningful, and which did not promote the children's learning, including in the outdoor area.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- subject leaders develop their skills further in their areas of responsibility
- there are more opportunities for pupils to write at length throughout the curriculum, so that all pupils make strong progress in their writing
- in the early years there are well-planned, meaningful and exciting curriculum experiences, including in the outdoor environment, to promote learning and raise standards.

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 Leicester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lindsay Alldis
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, other leaders and governors to discuss the school's progress since the last inspection. I also spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority and the Diocese of Leicester. I met with groups of parents and carers at the beginning of the school day. I spoke with pupils informally during the day and held a meeting with a group of pupils from a range of year groups. I heard some pupils read. I scrutinised a wide range of information, including policies and records relating to safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation and leaders' plans for improvement. I looked at assessment information for previous year groups and those pupils currently in the school. I considered the 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the 32 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and the six responses to Ofsted's staff survey. We did a focused walk around the whole school, observed learning in several classes and looked at pupils' work.