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23 January 2019

Mrs Sara Gray  
Headteacher  
Long Whatton Church of England Primary School and Community Centre  
The Green  
Long Whatton  
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LE12 5DB

Dear Mrs Gray

### **Short inspection of Long Whatton Church of England Primary School and Community Centre**

Following my visit to the school on 9 January 2019, 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 July 2015.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since the last inspection, the school has undergone a number of changes, most of which are very recent. Following a change in age range, there were Year 6 pupils in the school for the first time in the academic year 2017/18. You took up post as a new headteacher in September 2018. Other key leaders and members of the governing body are also new to role. You have rightly identified the need for immediate change to some long-standing school practices and for a more rigorous approach to school self-evaluation, planning and monitoring. You have made a good start but there are some important areas where urgent change is still needed – in the quality of challenge and support provided by the governing body and in management processes within the school.

Despite these concerns, there is much that remains strong. It was apparent at the start of the day that parents and carers are happy to send their children to this school. This impression was reinforced by Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, where every response confirmed that children feel happy and safe. Pupils themselves spoke about their school with pride, saying that it has been a 'really big influence on our lives'. The broad curriculum includes outdoor learning, an emphasis on music and physical health. Pupils said that 'we have such fun with

the topics' and 'learn so much'. The values set out in the Long Whatton Way are well developed and reinforced.

Attendance has remained high since the last inspection. Pupils' conduct seen during the inspection was impeccable. They were polite and friendly, always orderly and respectful. They played a full and enthusiastic part in learning. For example, in a key stage 2 literacy lesson, pupils contributed ambitious new vocabulary, such as 'translucent' and 'rugged rolling sea' to describe a scene from Antarctica, showing secure knowledge of the technical names of literary devices.

Where necessary changes have been made, there is already improvement. For example, you quickly made changes to start-of-day routines to further strengthen the way that pupils are safeguarded. During the inspection, parents brought their children to school promptly, joined in with 'Wakey Shakey', spoke to staff if they needed to and then left as the children lined up. The last inspection identified the need to improve the teaching of mathematics. Previous leaders and governors have addressed this area for improvement successfully.

Over the past three years, by the end of Reception, children reached a good level of development in proportions consistently above the national averages. In 2018, at the end of key stage 1, the proportions who reached expected standards in reading and in writing were in the highest 10% of schools in the country. However, over the same time, published outcomes from national tests suggest that not enough pupils have reached the highest standards. On your arrival at the school, you identified this and have introduced strategies to make the necessary improvements. It is too soon to know how this will affect outcomes in the summer.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Staff demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding pupils. They have been recently trained, alongside members of the governing body, and they are knowledgeable and well informed about a wide range of issues which could affect the safety of children. Recruitment of new staff is secure. The pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. During the inspection, pupils were particularly knowledgeable about staying safe on the internet. They know that they will be listened to if they are worried and can identify more than one trusted adult to whom they could go with any concerns. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and the children feel safe.

You are the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). In this role you have already instigated the recent training, rewritten the safeguarding policy, checked that other related policies exist and are consistently and effectively applied, changed some long-standing practices, such as the receiving of visitors, and begun to organise and improve records on child protection into a more appropriate system. You have made enough changes to ensure that effective arrangements which meet statutory requirements are in place.

Nevertheless, there is still a great deal to be tackled in administrative procedures,

some of it urgent. For example, you have not completed the organisation of children's child protection files. While evidence is clear that children are safe at present, there needs to be a systematic approach so that this remains the case. For example, you make referrals to other agencies appropriately but the details of these should be recorded so that it is clear what has been decided, why and by whom.

Shortcomings in the single central record of staff and volunteers were addressed with rigour and rectified before the end of the inspection day. Governors did not appear to have checked or been aware of these shortcomings prior to this inspection.

The safeguarding policy has been updated in light of changes to national guidance published in September 2018. Further revision is needed to ensure that any remaining shortcomings are addressed. For example, leaders should improve the clarity of advice to staff about paperwork if they need to tell the DSL that they are worried about a child.

### **Inspection findings**

- Since the last inspection, governors have not ensured that they provide robust challenge to school leaders, nor have they made sure that they carry out all statutory duties. This has included monitoring of safeguarding arrangements, alongside other areas such as required policies, annual reports and publication of information on the website and elsewhere. Governors' minutes from last year are incomplete. Governors have accepted what they were told by senior leaders too readily and have not followed up the few challenges they made.
- A new chair of governors started the role in September 2017. Members of the governing body have begun to change the way that they work. Committee responsibilities have become clearer. A review of governance had already been commissioned before this inspection. Governors care deeply about the school and are committed to its success. It is too soon to see any impact from the new approach but governors appear to be determined to make the changes necessary.
- Not enough pupils reach the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1. This has been the case for the past three years and it continues into key stage 2 where, in 2018, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher standards in national tests and assessments was below the national average. You have introduced more robust processes to keep an eye on pupils' progress, though you had not yet reported on the success of this work to governors. Work in pupils' books seen during this inspection shows that they are learning but there is inconsistency in teachers' expectations, such as for presentation of work. In lessons seen during the inspection, almost all pupils were doing the same activities without any difference in challenge for those who could achieve more. This area for improvement had already been identified by school leaders.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved since the last inspection. Most pupils reach expected standards by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. Work

recorded in books is challenging and varied, resulting in secure knowledge and understanding as pupils progress through the school. Examples were seen in pupils' books, and in a lesson during the inspection, where the use of mathematics was well integrated into other subjects, such as science and history. Most pupils are not yet reaching the higher standards in their mathematics. This is identified in school improvement planning as a next step.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- systematic processes are put in place urgently to make sure that the school carries out all statutory duties and responsibilities efficiently and effectively
- governors provide effective challenge and support to school leaders, including by responding to the findings of the external review of governance
- a larger proportion of pupils reach standards above those expected in their reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 and of key stage 2, given their starting points and national comparisons.

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

Joanne Ward  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I considered information from a range of sources, including the previous inspection report and the school's performance in national tests and assessments between 2016 and 2018. I reviewed the school's website and read a sample of policies. I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school and considered the 48 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. Meetings were held with you, with governors and with the local authority education effectiveness partner to discuss the school's progress since the last inspection. I considered a range of documentation, including improvement plans, information kept in school about pupils' attainment and progress, records of recruitment checks on staff and volunteers, a recruitment file sample, records of actions taken to protect pupils' welfare, and governors' minutes. I looked at records of staff training to ensure that they were up to date. I talked with staff to make sure they knew what to do if they were concerned about a child. You and I jointly made visits to lessons and looked at the quality of work in pupils' books. I observed pupils' behaviour at the start of the day, around school and in lessons and spoke to a group of Year 6 pupils to gather their views.