

Inspection of Long Wittenham (Church of England) Primary School

High Street, Long Wittenham, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4QJ

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this friendly and inclusive village school. They are happy and feel safe. Leaders aspire for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve highly. However, some aspects of the curriculum are not fully developed and some key stage 2 pupils, struggling to learn to read, are not given the help they need to catch up quickly.

Pupils behave well and look after each other. Relationships between pupils and staff are highly positive and respectful. Pupils trust adults in school to help them if needed. Incidents of bullying are low, and leaders respond to these well. Pupils know and can use the schools' five learning behaviours: 'we are aspirational, community minded, curious, determined and independent'.

Parents and carers recognise the strengths of the school. Many of them commenting on the positive changes made by the new leadership and staff team. Pupils benefit from a range of visits, visitors and wider learning opportunities, including instrumental tuition, a whole school visit to Marwell Zoo and participation in local events, such as the 'Henge project'. Pupils are proud of the leadership positions they hold and make a positive contribution to the life of the school and beyond.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The new leadership team and governors are resolute and united in their ambition to provide a high-quality education for all pupils. They have already made improvements to some key aspects of the school following a period of staffing turbulence. All children now benefit from a consistently strong approach to learning and teaching. Gaps in pupils' knowledge are clearly identified and support put in place to close these. Children in Reception are well prepared for the next stage of their learning in key stage 1.

In reading, mathematics and history, leaders have introduced a well-ordered curriculum that starts in the early years. Staff deliver these subjects confidently. They check pupil's understanding before moving on to new learning. Teachers understand the importance of revisiting knowledge, so that pupils remember more over time. However, in some other subjects, leader's work to design the curriculum is less well developed. They have not set out the essential knowledge and vocabulary they want pupils to learn. Leaders are aware of this, and plans are in place to make the necessary changes quickly.

Leaders work with teachers to carefully identify and track pupils who are struggling or have SEND. Leaders support teachers to provide carefully adapted lessons that allow all pupils to access the intended learning at an age-appropriate level. This process of identifying additional needs and providing support begins as soon as a child starts at the school.

Leaders have prioritised reading for younger pupils. They have embedded a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics in Reception and key stage 1. Pupils in these classes get lots of practise reading books that are well matched to the sounds they are learning. Children in Reception get off to a flying start, learning how to use language to communicate effectively as well as learning the sounds letters make. Some pupils in key stage 2, who are struggling to learn to read, are not getting the support they need. Leaders have purchased additional reading resources and started to train staff, so that they will have the expertise to help these pupils catch up with their peers. Teachers share carefully chosen, high-quality texts with pupils. Attractive and well-stocked book areas in each classroom encourage a love of reading. Leaders work closely with parents to give them useful strategies to help support their child's reading at home.

Leaders plan to promote pupils' personal development well. Pupils learn how to stay safe including when online. They know the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise. Pupils enjoy a variety of curricular and extra-curricular activities, such as visiting local museums and the church or learning how to make a fire safely in forest school. They understand the importance of positive relationships and how these are formed.

Leaders, teachers, pupils and parents all agree that behaviour has improved because of the new leadership in place. Pupils focus well in lessons, when listening to their teacher, working as a group or working independently. Leaders have made sure that the behaviour policy and routines are followed consistently. Pupils demonstrate good manners. They are polite towards each other, adults and visitors to the school. Pupils learn how to treat each other fairly and celebrate difference. This inclusive culture has helped ensure pupils new to the country, and to the school, feel welcomed and valued.

Governors care deeply about their school and their community. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Governors assure themselves that appropriate action is taken to secure continuous school improvement. All staff are proud to be part of this school and enjoy working here. Teachers benefit from the professional development opportunities that leaders provide. Leaders make sure that staff well-being and workload are considered when introducing any new initiative.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture. Staff receive regular training and updates. They have a secure understanding of what to look for and how to respond to safeguarding concerns. As a result, issues are spotted and passed on promptly, following the school's systems. Leaders work with external agencies, drawing on further support and expertise where required. Appropriate checks are carried out to ensure suitable adults are employed at the school. Leaders' actions are effective in keeping children safe. However, sometimes the way these actions are

recorded is not detailed or clear enough. Leaders acted quickly during the inspection to resolve issues raised.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's approach to teaching the weakest readers in key stage 2 is not well embedded. This means that some pupils are not able to practise and apply their phonics knowledge with the necessary frequency to become fluent and confident readers. Leaders must ensure that all staff know how to support pupils as they learn to read and that they follow the school's agreed process, including matching reading books to the sounds that pupils know.
- Not all foundation subject curriculum planning sets out the knowledge that pupils need to learn in a clear and logical sequence towards agreed end points. Leaders need to ensure that staff know and understand the knowledge that leaders have identified as most useful. Leaders should also ensure that this content is taught in a logical progression, systematically and explicitly enough for all pupils to acquire the intended knowledge and skills.
- Safeguarding record keeping is not always accurate enough. Occasionally, the chronologies of concerns about pupils are not complete and do not reflect the appropriate actions taken by the school in response to concerns. This risks important information being overlooked, should there be further concerns about any pupils. Leaders should ensure that the chronology of any concerns about pupils are sufficiently detailed and clear.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	123153
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10241206
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Catherine Harrison
Headteacher	Gillian Fraser
Website	www.longwittenhamschool.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 and 23 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Long Wittenham Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher started at the school in January 2022. The mathematics leader and the English leader were appointed in April 2022 and September 2022 respectively.
- The school has several Afghan refugee pupils on roll who are placed in temporary hotel accommodation until suitable housing can be found.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school care club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of governors. He also held separate online meetings with a representative from Oxfordshire Local Authority and a representative of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and teaching assistants, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. The lead inspector also heard pupils read.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors reviewed a wide range of safeguarding documentation, including the school's record of recruitment checks. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also spoke with pupils and staff.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, and parents' written comments. An inspector also spoke to groups of parents on the morning of the first day of inspection.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views throughout the day, including during lesson visits and at breaktimes. They also took into account responses to the pupils' survey.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff to gather their views about the school and took account of staff's responses to Ofsted's confidential staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Alan Derry, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ian Elkington

Ofsted Inspector

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