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Mrs Catherine Woodbine
Headteacher
Langafel Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
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Dear Mrs Woodbine

Short inspection of Langafel Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 October 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 to be good in March 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There have been changes within the leadership team over the last three years. The appointments of a new deputy headteacher and an additional educational needs leader are supporting you as headteacher. More recently, there have been a number of changes to teaching staff, and many subject leaders are new to their roles and responsibilities. Staff have a strong drive for improvement under your leadership to provide consistency in the quality of teaching and learning to improve outcomes for pupils.

You have an accurate view of the school's performance and have identified the right areas for development. You are tracking the progress of all pupils and increasing teachers' awareness of any gaps in pupils' learning. This is allowing teachers to adapt their planning to meet more closely the individual needs of those pupils who have gaps in their learning.

This is an inclusive school with an ethos of being a real family community. The school provides good-quality learning opportunities for all regardless of their individual needs. Pupils are supportive of each other and respect their individual differences. An increasing number of pupils have been diagnosed as having autistic spectrum disorder, and attend the special resourced provision (known in the school as 'SLIC' – socialise, learn, interact and communicate). These pupils receive good provision to meet their needs, both within the resourced provision and when integrated into classes. Highly skilled teaching assistants work well alongside

teachers in lessons to provide additional support. This enables pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, to make strong progress from their different starting points.

The school's values of friendship, trust, honesty and perseverance are embedded throughout the school. Many parents speak positively about the school and recognise the commitment of staff in tailoring their work to meet the needs of the pupils. One parent described this by saying, 'Parents are kept well informed of progress and are involved in their child's learning.'

You and your staff ensure that children get off to a good start in early years. Many children start school with skills that are lower than typical for their age, particularly in speech and language and their personal development. They make good progress in early years and are ready for moving on to the next stage in their education.

An area for improvement at the previous inspection was to further improve teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement. You were asked to make sure that teachers' expectations were consistently high, so that the most able pupils complete more challenging work and make faster progress. In 2017, an increasing number of pupils attained greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. Assessment information for 2018 shows that there has also been a further increase in the number of pupils learning at greater depth in mathematics.

At the end of key stage 2, in 2017, the most able pupils made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, with many attaining greater depth in their understanding in comparison with other pupils nationally. Provisional assessment information for 2018 shows that standards have been maintained, although there is a decrease in the number of pupils attaining greater depth in mathematics.

Additionally, you were asked to improve pupils' achievement in writing for Years 1 and 2 and to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to write for different purposes in a range of subjects. Assessment information shows that pupils' attainment in writing is improving steadily for key stage 1. You recognise that developing pupils' writing skills continues to be a priority.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Necessary checks are made on all staff prior to their taking up their appointments, and close scrutiny is given to visitors to the school.

Leaders, including governors, place a high priority on keeping pupils safe and providing strong pastoral care. Three members of staff are trained as designated safeguarding leads, and there is always a qualified member of staff in school to deal with any safeguarding concerns.

The safety and well-being of pupils are priorities for staff. They receive appropriate induction and ongoing training, and adults know what to do, how to act, and whom to tell if they have any concerns. School records are detailed, of high quality, and

provide leaders with an overview of any child protection concerns. Leaders take timely action when external advice or support is needed for children and families. Support staff and some teachers receive first-aid training so that they can deal with any emergencies or particular medical needs.

Parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, say that their children are happy at Langafel. Pupils reported that they feel safe at school and that they are not aware of any bullying. They said that behaviour is typically good in class and on the playground. Pupils understand that some of them have difficulty behaving appropriately at times and need space to calm down. Pupils know they can trust an adult to help them if they are upset or feel unsafe. 'Worry boxes' have been introduced recently, at the request of pupils, for those who find it more difficult to speak directly to an adult. Pupils learn how to stay safe in different situations, including when using the internet. They are proud of the posters they have made to remind other pupils of the potential risks.

Inspection findings

- I explored a number of key lines of enquiry during the inspection. These included checking on challenge within lessons, and the quality of pupils' writing, as these were areas for improvement in the previous inspection.
- Teachers are skilled in checking pupils' understanding and challenging them further. Pupils settle quickly to tasks and have positive attitudes to learning. In mathematics, teachers provide clear, consistent teaching to develop pupils' mathematical skills and reasoning at greater depth. Tasks are matched to the needs of pupils, and they respond well when encouraged to choose their level of challenge. Teachers use assessment within lessons well to identify gaps in learning and provide appropriate additional support.
- Pupils engage fully in using texts linked to topic themes, both in reading and through a wide range of activities to develop their speaking and writing skills. There are more planned opportunities for extended writing, particularly in Years 5 and 6. This approach has now been introduced across the school and is having a positive impact, with examples of good progress evident in pupils' books. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 wrote a blog for 'Farmers' Weekly' after reading the book 'The Iron Man'. However, teachers' expectations are not always high enough, and there are variations in the quality and quantity of work within classes and across the school.
- Pupils are not given enough chances to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English. There are too few opportunities for pupils to edit and improve their own work, and they are not always clear about what they need to include in their writing in order to achieve the learning objective. This limits the progress that some pupils make. Pupils' work is not always presented neatly because there is not a consistently applied approach to teaching handwriting in the school.
- Finally, I looked at how well leaders are monitoring the impact of their actions for school improvement and how governors are holding them to account. Leaders for English and mathematics understand the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. Over the past year, they have introduced new initiatives which are

supporting improvements to teaching across the school. They are skilled in monitoring to show the impact of their actions and next steps for school improvement.

- Governors bring a wide range of experiences and skills to their role. They have a good understanding of the school's key priorities and of the actions that leaders are taking to address them. Governors provide both support and challenge to leaders through their monitoring, but also through their input during governing body meetings.
- Many subject leaders are new to role, so it is too early to fully measure their impact. They are developing a progression of knowledge, skills and understanding within their subject areas, but you agree that implementation of the curriculum and the development of assessment for subjects other than English and mathematics are in the early stages.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to write at length across a range of subjects to practise their basic writing skills by:
 - identifying and planning opportunities for extended writing through the broader curriculum
 - making clear to pupils what they need to include in their writing in order to achieve the learning objective
 - encouraging pupils to make better use of the independent learning resources to edit and improve their own work
 - raising expectations for the quality and presentation of pupils' work
- they continue to develop the assessment of subjects other than English and mathematics, so that subject leaders can monitor pupils' progress across the broader curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Pauline MacMillan

Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We discussed the key lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's internal evaluation of its performance, plans for future improvement, and information about pupils' progress and attainment. During the inspection, I held meetings with you, members of the leadership team, four subject leaders, five governors (including the chair of the governing body), and administrative staff. Together, we visited every class to look at teaching and learning. I looked at a sample of pupils' current work across a range of subjects. I spoke informally to a number of pupils in classrooms about their learning, and met with a group of pupils to talk about their school experience. I also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, as they moved around the school, and at playtimes. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures and the records of checks leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children. I considered the views of parents and carers through 60 responses to Parent View and 23 free-text messages. I also took into account 16 responses from staff to Ofsted's online questionnaire.