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Tuesday 5th May

Dear Parents and Carers,

Ofsted report 2023

Attached with this emailed letter, you will find the final Ofsted report from our inspection in March. We found the process to be rigorous and fair and the findings represent where we are as a school. As it was an ungraded inspection, the report had a limited word count and it does not reflect everything the inspectors shared with Laura Annett, Wendy Soar and I as school leaders and with governors. As the report is relatively short, I thought you would like to know some of the additional information that was shared at the final meeting of our inspection.

Behaviour

Children are respectful of each other and adults and staff manage behaviour with a happy, consistent approach. There are reliable systems in place and there is a robust approach to following up behaviour. Children are focussed, are sensible moving around school and the classrooms, and are prompt at following instructions. They say they feel happy and safe and know how to get support if they need it. There is no low level disruption in class and a very consistent approach from staff. Bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively.

Reading

The school has clear, high ambition for all children to learn to read quickly. We have a well mapped approach to Read Write Inc. and the investment in training staff has paid off. There is high quality and quantity of phonics teaching. Expert subject knowledge held by staff and as a result children develop a love of reading. Pupils read often and there is investment in high quality texts for reading plus author visits. This relaunched scheme has been embraced by staff and children are making good progress.

Early Years

There have been lots of changes recently, particularly with the well thought-out curriculum. Assessment accurately identify gaps and it is a well-resourced classroom. Staff have a real drive to ensure children are engaged and are purposeful. Children thrive following their own curiosity - on the day Ofsted visited they were very happy whisking mud pies and making birds' nests, inspired by one they found. The transition to Year 1 has been considered carefully. There is strong thought put into the curriculum and where the children go next. Early years translates



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clearly in KS1 and well considered links are embedded. Maths setting in Year groups provides children with the opportunity to explore in relevant ways and real life contexts. There is real ambition and challenge with purposeful conversations. Children are provided with very strong foundations.

Maths and Geography

The relaunched curriculum is what makes the biggest difference for children. It is research informed and different components build over time. No stone has been left unturned. There is fierce commitment to get it right for the children. As a small school, workload for staff is high but leaders have found ways to be as smart with this as possible. Staff are on board with the development and there is a sense of collaboration. Subject substance matters and the vocabulary taught is explicit. This reflects leaders' reflectiveness.

Hierarchical knowledge builds over time. In Maths lessons, children's ability to reason grows over time at the school. Assessment routines are effective in maths, phonics and Geography. Children are excited about building knowledge over time. Tweaking and refining will ensure assessments measure exactly which specific vocabulary and knowledge children need to know. When talking to the children about their learning it was 'the most enthusiastic information sharing I've ever heard'. Leaders have done a lot in short amount of time.

Staff development and workload.

Teaching is stronger as a result of effective professional development. Further investment in assessment will also bring benefits. Staff say that leaders focus on the right thing for the children. Decisions are because of the difference it makes for children. Everyone's wellbeing is considered. For example, wellbeing week included opportunities for staff too. Pointless paperwork exercises have been changed/ removed and wellbeing and workload are considered by leaders. Governors try to be available in school for staff to talk to.

Inclusion

The approach to inclusion at this school is very strong. Staff know individuals really well. Children are active participants in their learning which is facilitated by staff. There is clear vision to ensure SEND pupils are included. Regular meetings track pupil progress which means swift and early intervention. As a result, some children do not need to be on the SEND register. There is very strong involvement of parents and support for SEND children. The school has strong external links (e.g. with Tring school). SEND children are very well supported in class. TAs are experienced and have confidence to adapt strategies so learning is purposeful.

Safeguarding

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) are well trained and provide regular updates. Records are factual and detailed. Leaders are very clear to seek clarifications when needed. Governors are well trained and are confident in the signs of abuse. Safeguarding is regularly discussed at Full Governing Body meetings. The single central record (SCR), which checks staff are safe to work in schools, is externally checked and up to date. Children know how to stay safe online and when crossing roads. They are taught rules in assembly and in lessons. They know what to do if they are concerned. Worry boxes provide children with an opportunity to share concerns.



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Wider development

PSHE and RSE are supported with external visitors and add richness to the curriculum. Diversity is celebrated in carefully selected text and religious visitors. It is well signposted in assemblies and those with different backgrounds are celebrated. There are a broad range of clubs, competitions and residential. Charities are well considered and children are given real opportunities to develop leadership roles. Children take pride in the opportunities they are given. There is a commitment to embedding the values and inclusivity. Makaton club is a good example. When talking to children, one child said 'we don't have disabilities at this school, just different abilities'.

Children talked with confidence about odd socks day, different faiths and skin colours. They talked about their friends from Ukraine and how welcomed they have been. They mentioned Women's day, autism awareness and demonstrated their broad understanding of the world. They are explicitly taught about peer pressure, healthy eating, PANTS campaign, relationships and they know that bad choices have an impact. Children show kindness and praise others. There is strong language of feelings and they have confidence that they can have impact on the world they live in.

Overall

Personal Development is heading towards outstanding. Across the board there has been very hard work by leaders with a focus on let's do what our children need and this is embedded in what was seen in the children. The capacity for the school to improve is significantly strong.

I hope you find this additional information helpful. I am very proud of the staff team at Long Marston. Not just because of the inspection validating all the work that has been put in, but for the effort and care they put in for the children each and every day.

Yours faithfully,



Laura Whateley
Headteacher



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