

Inspection of a good school: Long Marston VA Church of England Primary School

Station Road, Long Marston, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 4QS

Inspection dates:

21 March 2023

Outcome

Long Marston Voluntary Aided (VA) Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their learning at Long Marston VA Church of England School. They work hard in lessons and become confident, independent learners. They develop positive relationships with each other and with adults. This contributes towards pupils being happy and safe.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), respond well to the high expectations of staff in terms of both their work and their behaviour. Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. Pupils know that bullying is more than a single incident. They say it rarely happens but that adults do deal with it quickly when and if it does. Pupils explain that if they have a concern they can speak to a trusted adult or use the 'worry boxes' in classrooms.

Pupils are polite and respectful. They enjoy the opportunities they have to take on responsibilities in the school, for example as a school council member or a lunch monitor. Pupils who act as 'well-being warriors' learn about strategies to promote positive mental health and well-being. They build their confidence through the sharing of these strategies with other pupils. This helps to raise awareness of the importance of mental health and positive attitudes to all pupils.

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

Leaders have high ambition for all pupils to achieve well. A carefully designed curriculum starts in the early years and continues throughout the school. Pupils are given opportunities to develop the secure foundations that they need for their future learning. Leaders have carefully considered how the curriculum is planned effectively to support pupils to successfully learn in mixed-aged classes. Leaders have identified the most

important information that pupils need to learn. They have broken each aspect down into small manageable steps which supports pupils to build their knowledge over time. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, and consequently they are able to teach the curriculum with confidence. They regularly check and revisit what pupils should know. This helps pupils to remember what they have learned. Teachers adapt their teaching so that all pupils, including those with SEND, can access the curriculum. They identify gaps and misconceptions routinely in their teaching. Teachers use their subject expertise to quickly address these. Leaders have recently introduced a new approach to assessment. In some foundation subjects, the checking of what pupils know is not as developed to ensure that pupils are remembering the most important vocabulary and content they need for their future learning.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of reading. In early years, children begin to learn phonics and are introduced to high-quality books as soon as they start school. Leaders carefully choose the books that children read to develop their awareness of different styles of writing and of different cultures. Authors regularly visit the school and provide workshops to engage pupils with reading. Pupils develop a love of reading. Leaders ensure staff are well trained so they are knowledgeable in teaching early reading. This helps all pupils to learn to read quickly. Adults routinely check the sounds that pupils know and put support in place to help pupils who struggle to learn to read.

Leaders have put appropriate systems in place to identify and support pupils with SEND. Plans outline the most suitable strategies to support individual pupils' needs. Staff use these documents, along with their knowledge from training, to effectively plan and teach their lessons. This helps pupils with SEND to access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers so they achieve well from their various starting points.

Pupils enjoy the trips and visitors to school which link to their learning. Leaders promote and include opportunities to deepen pupils' awareness of difference. Pupils celebrate this within the school through activities such as anti-bullying week and Makaton club. These also promote pupils' understanding of protected characteristics. A range of clubs are well attended. These support pupils to develop a range of skills, including sport and a focus on creativity.

Staff appreciate the support which leaders provide to help manage their workload and well-being. Leaders listen to feedback from staff and there is an ongoing system to improve the working environment for all staff.

Governors know the school well and work closely with leaders to improve the school. They provide effective support and challenge through regular checks and scrutiny.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise safeguarding in the school. Staff receive regular training and updates so that they can identify any risks to pupils. Staff record and report concerns factually.

Leaders follow up concerns quickly. Leaders carry out appropriate pre-employment checks and record these accurately.

Staff know pupils and families well. This helps them to provide support and identify changes to pupils that may alert them to a potential concern. They work in partnership with external agencies to provide pupils and families with the help they need.

Pupils' curriculum teaches them how to stay safe. For example, pupils learn about internet safety in lessons and assemblies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of foundation subjects, assessment systems are not as well developed. The checking processes do not focus precisely on the most important knowledge pupils need to know and remember. As a result, pupils do not have a consistently strong automatic recall of concepts they need for future learning. Leaders should continue their work to further refine assessment practices. This will ensure that teachers prioritise checking that pupils can recall the knowledge they need to succeed at each stage of their learning, so they are successfully knowing and remembering more.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2012.

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

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| Unique reference number | 117459 |
| Local authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 10268660 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 122 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Jane Banister |
| Headteacher | Laura Whateley |
| Website | www.longmarston.herts.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 12 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Long Marston VA Church of England Primary School is smaller than the averaged-sized primary school.
- The current headteacher took up their post in September 2021.
- The school has a Christian religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2019. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, reviewed curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning, spoke with teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors held meetings with the leaders with responsibility for behaviour, SEND, personal, social and health education and early years.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body. He also met with the Hertfordshire improvement partner.
- Inspectors considered the 49 responses and 33 free-text responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors also reviewed the nine responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Wayne Jarvis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kristian Hewitt

His Majesty's Inspector

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