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Mrs Kerrie Courtier
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Dear Mrs Courtier

Short inspection of Longvernal Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 April 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 October 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Since the previous inspection, the school has become a member of a multi-academy trust. The school has grown rapidly, more than doubling in size. In addition, a high number of pupils have joined the school at times other than normal transition. The school has extended its provision to include two-year-olds. During this time, leaders, including governors, have ensured that the standards pupils reach have continued to rise. A high and rising proportion of pupils do well in reading, writing and mathematics.

You have built a very strong and effective leadership team. Together with your fellow leaders, you have ensured that the quality of teaching continues to improve. Leaders' accurate feedback to teachers helps them improve their practice rapidly. Teachers value highly the support and professional development they receive and say that it helps them to strengthen their teaching even further. Senior leaders are uncompromising in their ambition for pupils. They exemplify strong practice to middle leaders and teachers. As a result, the staff of the school form a cohesive team who are closely focused on improving outcomes for all pupils.

The curriculum is broad and wide-ranging, with diversity and equality very clearly at its heart. As a result, pupils say that this is a school where it does not matter what religion or gender you are; everyone is treated equally. Using the outdoor environment to explore the curriculum is an important part of the school's ethos. Pupils' skills in writing, mathematics and problem solving are all strengthened through interesting and well-planned opportunities to learn in practical ways outside. Children in the early years have a wide range of opportunities across the areas of learning to investigate in their outdoor classroom spaces.

The school's local governing board know their school well. There are clear lines of accountability between them and the directors of the multi-academy trust. Governors and trust officials provide effective challenge to school leaders about the standards pupils reach. Joining the trust has successfully enabled leaders and governors to widen the provision they offer to pupils.

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to strengthen the teaching of handwriting. Standards of handwriting and presentation in pupils' English and mathematics books are now high. However, in a few cases, this does not extend to pupils' written work elsewhere in the curriculum. The school was also asked to help pupils quickly recall number facts to aid their problem solving. Pupils now use their skills in calculation and knowledge of times tables effectively. In addition, pupils successfully apply a range of mathematical strategies. For example, pupils in Year 6 used multiplication and division effectively to simplify fractions.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Governors and staff receive regular and relevant training relating to safeguarding. Staff, including those new to the school, are vigilant and know what to do if they have a concern about a child. School leaders are robust in their response to safeguarding concerns. They follow through actions briskly and tenaciously. School leaders work closely with external agencies such as the police and have a good understanding of risks specific to children's safety. Governors and trust staff check that the school's safeguarding work is effective. This includes regular checking of the single central record and asking pupils for their views.

Pupils feel safe and happy at school, and behave very well. They say that incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are rare. Pupils are clear that adults will sort out any concerns quickly. Pupils value the support of the adults at school, saying that the school is 'like a family'. Pupils are listened to at school. They say that adults are 'open-hearted' and interested in what they have to say. These views were very strongly supported by the responses of parents to the online Parent View survey.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I checked on the progress of the most able pupils. This was because, although increasing in number over time, too few pupils reach a

deeper level of understanding in writing. Current most-able pupils are making good, often strong, progress. Teachers' skilful questioning challenges the most able pupils very well in their learning. Pupils know what they need to do to improve their work because of the accurate feedback they receive from their teachers. Teachers' effective assessment swiftly and accurately identifies pupils who are struggling and those that can move on more quickly. They briskly adapt their teaching accordingly.

- In writing, leaders identified that pupils needed to experience more complex vocabulary to help them write in increasing depth. Teachers, and additional adults, model language and writing very well. A range of well-thought-out initiatives are having a strongly positive impact on pupils' use of vocabulary in their writing. For example, pupils in Year 2 can now accurately identify why some words and phrases are more effective than others when editing their writing. Increasing numbers of pupils are writing at a complex level across the school. However, in the early years, while the writing of some most-able children shows rapid progress, for others their progress is not as sustained.
- I investigated how well the curriculum supports girls' learning. This was because boys have stronger progress than girls by the end of Year 6. Teachers have equally high expectations of boys and girls. They ask thought-provoking questions and expect equally high standards from all pupils, irrespective of gender. The well-planned and interesting curriculum inspires pupils to learn well. For example, in a session of outdoor learning in Year 1, boys and girls were keen to write about the shields they had made linked to their learning on castles. Girls demonstrated their interest in learning when offering to explain, accurately, the differences between the three main types of castle they were learning about.
- In mathematics, the standard of girls' work is as high as that of boys. For example, girls in Year 6 use a range of different strategies and their sound mathematical knowledge successfully when solving complex problems involving fractions. Girls' mathematics books show that they regularly extend their reasoning about mathematics.
- I looked to see how well pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do at school. Pupils with SEND make strong progress from their different starting points because their needs are accurately identified and well understood by leaders and teachers. The leader for special educational needs tracks effectively the impact of interventions for these pupils and changes are swiftly made to provision to better suit pupils' needs.
- Leaders understand well the barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils face. Leaders carefully plan and monitor the support these pupils receive with the result that their progress is improving. Leaders' actions, such as providing breakfast and after-school clubs, are improving attendance and reducing the number of times pupils are late for school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers' high expectations of handwriting and presentation in pupils' English and mathematics books extend to all pupils in their wider curriculum work
- improvements in pupils' use of vocabulary are consolidated so that the proportion of pupils reaching a deeper level of understanding for their age in writing continues to increase, including in the early years.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing board, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bath and North East Somerset Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sarah O'Donnell
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the associate headteacher and other leaders including the chair and vice-chair of governors. I held a phone call with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust. Together, we visited all classes in the school, talked with pupils about their learning and looked at their work. Together with other leaders, we looked at pupils' books. I met a group of pupils to talk about school life. I considered the 33 responses to the pupil online questionnaire. I evaluated the 27 responses to the online staff questionnaire and spoke with staff around the school. I spoke with parents and carers informally at the start of the day. I considered the 34 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and two letters received from parents. I talked with staff, governors and trust officers about the school's safeguarding work. I looked at a range of school documents relating to school improvement, safeguarding and the safe recruitment of staff.