Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Long Melford Church of England Primary School

Cordell Road, Long Melford, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 9ED

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 December 2024

Outcome

Long Melford Church of England Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Amanda Woolmer. This school is part of the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Tracey Caffull, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Blit.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a warm and inclusive school. Pupils feel happy and safe as part of one caring and supportive school 'family'. They look forward to assemblies, where things like kindness, working hard, and demonstrating the school's values are celebrated. Children in early years are motivated to show these values too. This is because they earn opportunities like taking home 'Roy the cuddly fox' for displaying them.

The school is a hub of learning and purposeful activity. Pupils find classroom environments stimulating and the learning they undertake engaging. For example, children in early years enjoy carefully peeling Brussels sprouts to prepare a Christmas meal for Rudolph.

Pupils get lots of help and support with dealing with the emotions they experience. Staff are very caring. They take the time to understand what may be causing any issues. Therefore, pupils behave well, as their needs are well met and understood.

Pupils know there are high expectations for their achievement. They generally meet these well. This is because teachers support them in learning a challenging and interesting

curriculum. Pupils who have any gaps in their understanding get the support they need to catch up.

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

The school has worked hard to develop the curriculum effectively. It is broad and ambitious and prepares pupils well for secondary education. The school has engaged with trust and external networks of best practice to ensure the curriculum is grounded in research. For example, in science, pupils undertake lots of scientific enquiry. This is brought to life with trips and visits. These include the genome campus in Cambridge. Consequently, pupils see themselves as scientists as they experience science firsthand. The same is true in other subject areas. Pupils develop as historians because they undertake real archaeological digs, which brings their understanding to life and deepens their knowledge.

The school has worked with the trust to develop an effective approach to assessment. Teachers check what pupils know and plan teaching based on this. They regularly check how well pupils can recall and use important knowledge. Staff then target additional support where pupils need it. This is also true for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND have their needs carefully identified. Teachers make the adjustments to learning that pupils need to be able to access the curriculum fully. For example, pupils with sensory needs have a specially adapted room to support them well.

The school has developed further its approach to teaching early reading. This is very well established. In the early years, teachers carefully match books to the sounds children learn. Staff teach children how to decode and blend words precisely. Children have many opportunities to practise and secure this through activities such as drawing club.
This effective approach to teaching reading continues further up the school. Pupils learn to read with fluency and develop a love of a wide range of books. Library monitors help grow this across the school. They also develop their leadership skills by supporting younger children with reading.

However, pupils do not achieve as well as they might with English grammar, punctuation and spelling. The school has put in place a new approach to improve pupils' writing, including a focus on these skills, but this is at an early stage.

Pupils behave well. They follow clear rules and get the support they need to ensure a harmonious environment. Attendance has improved in recent years. This is because the school understands the barriers to good attendance and provides very personalised support to help families overcome these.

Pupils benefit from a wealth of experiences that prepare them for life beyond school. They learn about business and enterprise by running stalls in the local village. They learn about democracy through the school council deciding how best to spend money. They have access to a treasure trove of clubs and activities such as band academy, girls'

football, and musical productions. There really is something to help develop everyone's talents and interests.

The school works closely with the trust to provide high-quality support and development opportunities for staff. Governance works effectively at all levels, including supporting staff's workload and well-being. This work has led to the school being at the very heart of the community. This is shown by the school's pivotal role in village events such as the 'Festive Long Melford' celebrations. All of this has ensured that leaders have maintained standards since the last inspection and moved them forward in some areas.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes teachers do not support pupils in developing the quality of their grammar, punctuation and spelling well enough. This is because the whole school approach to teaching this is at an early stage. As a result, the accuracy of pupils' writing is not always of a high standard. The school should ensure that grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught consistently well so that the quality of pupils' writing is the best it can be.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in July 2019.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	143147
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10345446
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Blit
CEO of the trust	Tracey Caffull
Headteacher	Amanda Woolmer
Website	www.longmelfordprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- This is a Church of England school in the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The last section 48 inspection took place in May 2019. The next inspection is due by May 2027.
- The school is part of the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi Academy Trust. The headteacher is the executive headteacher across both schools.
- The school's nursery provision is on the same site and run by the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the local governing body, trustees and the CEO.
- The inspector met with the head of professional development, the executive headteacher, the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator and other staff.
- The inspector conducted further meetings with staff regarding special educational needs provision, attendance and personal development.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and at social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.
- The inspector took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View, the questionnaire for parents and carers, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

James Chester, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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