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Mrs Nicola St John
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs St John

Short inspection of St Katharine's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 June 2017, 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You are a much admired, respected and trusted leader within the school community. Due to your strong vision, which is widely shared and understood, this is a caring, nurturing school where everyone feels, and is, valued. It is also a school where pupils succeed. You are determined to find 'a spark of greatness in everyone' so that staff and pupils alike can shine. Your clear, consistent and strong leadership permeates the school. You show strength and determination in ensuring that your leadership decisions are based on solid values, which you name as 'grace, integrity and aspiration'. Parents are behind you and are overwhelming in their praise for the way you lead the school.

Through the exciting, vibrant curriculum, pupils learn to appreciate the beautiful local environment. Much emphasis is on learning how to learn, through 'powerful learning attributes'. Pupils learn to collaborate, to be resilient, to make decisions and to be creative. Hand-in-hand with this drive to create successful learners, there is also a strong caring ethos where well-being is seen as being vital to success. As a result, pupils are confident young learners who achieve well and are well prepared for their future lives.

At the previous inspection, an area for improvement was to continue to improve the

quality of teaching and learning. You have created a strong, loyal leadership team around you. Your team are determined to continue to improve teaching and learning and they support you effectively as you work together to develop the significant number of new teachers that have joined the school in the past two years. Teachers starting out in their profession have every chance of succeeding here, as there is such clarity about how things are done. You, along with your leadership team, are highly visible around the school, providing constant support to staff and giving them valuable feedback. This ongoing advice helps teachers to do the very best for the pupils in their care. As a result, teaching and learning across the school is consistently good or better.

You, along with your leadership team, have taken time to carefully consider the changes to national assessments and have developed a school assessment system to reflect these changes. Learning is important to all at this school and you model this yourself through a highly researched-based approach. You have carefully defined the planning and assessment of the curriculum and how this is to be achieved at St Katharine's. This provides teachers with clarity about how to plan lessons, from ensuring that pupils understand what success will look like through to pupils having a final product and audience to aim for.

Due to your guidance, teachers are confident to assess what it is that pupils know, can do and understand and to provide feedback to them on their next steps in order to deepen their understanding. Governors use the assessment information that you provide to look for and check the progress of groups of pupils across the school but this is yet to be firmly embedded.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders are very clear that it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that pupils are safe. Staff receive training and updates and they communicate well with one another to ensure that any concerns are acted on quickly and robustly.

The designated leads for safeguarding liaise carefully with external agencies in order to ensure that they are well informed about a wide range of issues related to safeguarding. For example, leaders ensure that they are kept up to date about procedures related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation.

Pupils say they feel safe and the overwhelming majority of parents agree that their children are safe, well looked after and happy at the school.

Inspection findings

- Some key lines of enquiry were identified to explore further during the inspection. The first line of enquiry was about how effectively leaders, including subject leaders, drive forward improvement and check the impact of their work.
- Thanks to your strong direction, the leadership team works very well together to

ensure that the school continues to move forward. Everyone is very clear about his or her roles and responsibilities. There is an impressive clarity of thinking and a passion to ensure that the school produces confident, successful learners.

- Through their consistent checking of books and learning, leaders know the strengths of the quality of teaching and learning and the areas to be further improved. For example, this year there has been a focus on improving pupils' understanding of their reading and to ensure that girls respond more positively to their learning in mathematics. This is starting to have an impact on the progress pupils make across the school in reading, particularly for the most able pupils and for girls in mathematics.
- Our second line of enquiry explored how well leaders, including governors, check that pupils are making at least good progress across year groups and in a range of subjects. A strength that shines through at this school is how well leaders know individual pupils and their progress. There are frequent 'checkpoint times' through the year where leaders describe the impact of their work on pupils' achievement and the areas to be further developed.
- There has been a focus on providing additional support for disadvantaged pupils in order to narrow any differences in achievement. Leaders and governors are able to give strong examples of how individual pupils are thriving due to the extra attention they receive. In line with the recent changes to the national assessment system, leaders ensure that governors receive new assessment information about the progress that pupils make across a range of subjects. This helps governors to ask questions and provide appropriate challenge to leaders and they are increasingly confident to do so.
- The third line of enquiry was to look at how well leaders are tackling weaknesses in attendance for some groups of pupils who do not attend well. Pupils across the school really enjoy their learning; expectations of attendance are high and pupils generally attend very well. Overall rates of attendance have consistently been above national levels. Leaders know families well and a range of extra support from a wide range of agencies is used to ensure that any pupils who need extra help to attend well receive it. Attendance for disadvantaged pupils is steadily improving due to this care and attention.
- Finally, we looked at how leaders have secured such strong outcomes for children in the early years over recent years. Much work has taken place to improve the provision in the Reception classes since the previous inspection. Leaders have an unwavering, steadfast view that children arriving at the school will achieve the very highest standards possible in order to get them off to a flying start.
- The very high expectations ensure that children consistently achieve very well during their first year. This means that they are very well prepared for learning in Year 1. All children achieved at least the expected standards in reading and mathematics by the end of their first year in 2016 and writing standards were well above the national average.
- Children explore an engaging range of learning activities and staff are well informed about the exact next steps for each child across a range of learning

areas. This helps them to ensure that children are encouraged to take part in activities that challenge and deepen their thinking. As a result, children thrive and make excellent progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- disadvantaged pupils consistently make at least good progress from their starting points
- information about the progress that different groups of pupils make across the school is clearly presented so that governors are able to provide appropriate challenge to leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Tonwen Empson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with five governors including the chair of the governing body. A meeting also took place with the local authority adviser who supports the school. The lead inspector spoke to a group of pupils as well as other pupils during the day.

The inspector listened to the views of parents at the start of the day and took account of the 85 responses to the online survey, Parent View. Pupils' books were looked at during learning walks, which were carried out alongside the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Several school documents were taken into account including the school's self-evaluation of its performance, the school development plan, documents related to the progress of pupils as well as a range of documents related to safeguarding and attendance.