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Mrs Anne-Marie Taylor  
Headteacher  
St Katherine's Church of England Primary School  
Hilton Road  
Canvey Island  
Essex  
SS8 9QA

Dear Mrs Taylor

### **Short inspection of St Katherine's Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 November 2015, 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 November 2011.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You became headteacher in September 2015, having previously been the school's deputy headteacher for a number of years. Yours is a popular appointment; parents are very appreciative of the school generally and of your leadership in particular. It is clear that you and the new deputy headteacher are already forming a strong team with a clear vision for how you want the school to progress from here.

Pupils show great pride in their school. They enjoy their lessons and talk enthusiastically about their learning. The school has adopted its own approach to help pupils to be independent learners. They know that they should 'see three before me' (that is, to think for themselves, look in a book or ask a friend before asking the teacher for help). This works well, and pupils are developing particularly good attitudes to learning.

The school has a very welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. Pupils say that in their school 'you don't judge people', and it is clear that they are taught that discrimination of any sort is unacceptable. Pupils have a very good understanding of what bullying is and what it is not. When discussing bullying with the inspector, one pupil said that, 'people have to be an up-stander not a bystander', reflecting how all pupils have been taught to speak up for others as well as themselves.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and the school's governors have ensured that arrangements to keep pupils safe are strong and effective. The school's single central register, for example, meets statutory requirements, is updated frequently and is checked regularly by the Chair of the Governing Body to ensure that it remains thorough, complete and up to date. Stringent processes are in place to ensure that the suitability of applicants is checked thoroughly before an appointment is made.

As the designated senior lead for child protection, you have received appropriate training to enable you to fulfil your role. You have also ensured that the deputy headteacher has received the same level of training so that there is good leadership coverage at all times. You have also attended training on the government's 'Prevent' strategy (government advice to schools to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism). Safeguarding training for staff is up to date. The school's leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

## **Inspection findings**

- The school's leaders are well aware that disadvantaged pupils do not always do as well as other pupils in the school. You know the pupils in your school very well and you know the individual stories behind each pupil's achievement. You and the leadership team monitor the progress of all pupils carefully but pay particularly close attention to this group. You have put a range of appropriate strategies in place to help disadvantaged pupils to make as much progress as possible, such as weekly one-to-one tutoring sessions with a qualified teacher. You already monitor the impact of these interventions. You now need to ensure that they are monitored even more closely to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make faster progress as a result of them and that strategies are changed promptly if they are not having the desired result.
- You know the school well and have a very good understanding of its strengths and where it still needs to improve. The school's self-evaluation summary is accurate and up to date. Similarly, the school's development plan is appropriate and fit for purpose. However, although the two documents do link together, the links could be stronger. In other words, you now need to develop a more joined-up approach to school improvement so that the action plan is directly informed by self-evaluation.
- Much has been done to improve the quality of teaching since the last inspection four years ago. Some weaker teaching remains, but good support is in place and there is evidence that teaching is improving rapidly. The school has achieved this by adopting its own 'professional partners' approach and this is used well to ensure that the school's areas for improvement are kept at the forefront of teachers' minds. You and the school's other leaders monitor teaching regularly through full observations of lessons and shorter 'drop in' sessions where you observe a small part of a lesson. Feedback is always given to teachers following

these sessions, including how teaching could be improved and developed. Although this feedback is usually effective, in some instances the areas for development are not explicit enough and could be more sharply focused.

- The school has worked effectively on developing teachers' use of questioning. This was demonstrated well in a Year 6 literacy lesson where the teacher's strong and targeted questioning encouraged pupils to think deeply about characters' feelings and what each character might write in response to events in the story. One pupil said, 'I would write "you've emotionally scarred me"', showing a particularly mature response.
- Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds that they represent) screening check have fluctuated since the test was introduced four years ago. The school has made good progress in improving the quality of phonics teaching and in ensuring that a consistent approach is used throughout the school. The school purchased a commercial phonics scheme a year ago and you have now ensured that all members of staff have received appropriate training to deliver sessions well. During the inspection, we observed a phonics session in the Reception class. The teacher's very strong subject knowledge and particularly captivating style of delivery resulted in the children making very good progress.
- The school's leaders monitor the progress pupils make closely and intervene appropriately when pupils do not make the progress they should. As a result, pupils make good progress throughout the school. Early years is increasingly a strength of the school and children make a strong start to their school careers. In 2015, the proportion of pupils who achieved a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year was above the national average. Similarly, outcomes at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 were above the national average, demonstrating pupils' good progress.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- interventions, such as the provision of one-to-one tutoring sessions, are monitored very closely to ensure that they are having maximum impact and providing best value for money
- feedback given to teachers after lesson observations and 'drop in' is always clear and precise
- self-evaluation and improvement planning are explicitly linked
- the best teaching practice is shared widely to further improve the quality of teaching throughout the school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Chelmsford, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Essex County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Varney  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector met with the school council and spoke with other pupils throughout the day. The inspector spoke with parents in the playground and looked at responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The inspector also took account of online responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires. The inspector observed teaching and learning in lessons jointly with the headteacher, looked at pupils' books, and scrutinised a range of school documents.