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Mr Charles Beckerson  
Headteacher  
St Bartholomew's Church of England Aided Primary School  
Derby Road  
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Dear Mr Beckerson

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

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 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 June 2013.

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

There have been significant changes to the school since the previous inspection. Despite this, you have sustained the good quality of education within a calm and purposeful learning atmosphere. You, together with leaders and governors, have seen the expansion of the school, necessitating a major building project and an increase in staff numbers. However, you have not lost sight of the core values of respect, tolerance and kindness that underpin the quality of education at the school. As one parent wrote: 'My son has made a great start to his school career and he bounces happily into school every day. The school's ethos makes for a particularly nurturing environment for his social and emotional development.'

Pupils are happy and they enjoy school and this is reflected in their good attendance. They find lessons interesting because teachers provide rich learning experiences that make pupils want to learn. The learning environment is bright and attractive with stimulating displays of pupils' work around every corner. Pupils have a rich curriculum that teaches them about life in the past as well as the challenges faced by some people who live in the developing world. Pupils know that people around the world practise faiths and beliefs that may be different to their own, but are of equal value. Pupils understand that they should treat others equally and fairly, regardless of background.

You have developed the quality of teaching so that there is now a much stronger focus on how well pupils are learning. Staff have embraced these changes and this is reflected in the consistently good teaching that we observed during this short inspection. One member of staff wrote: 'This is the best school I have ever worked in. We are always looking for ways to improve performance, enhance learning and prepare children for the wider world.' During lessons, teachers frequently deepen pupils' learning by asking challenging questions that take pupils one step further. Teachers use pupils' misconceptions to help them to understand where they make their mistakes. One particular feature of teaching is the way in which teachers ask pupils to explain their thinking and justify their reasons. This deepens pupils' learning and helps them to understand that they learn from mistakes.

You and the governors have a clear grasp of what the school does well and where further improvements are required. You have addressed the areas for improvement raised in the last inspection while overseeing the expansion of the school. You have maintained a good quality of teaching that enables pupils currently in school to make rapid progress. You have appointed a new leader of mathematics who has provided training for staff to develop their practice so that pupils have the opportunity to solve mathematical problems in subjects other than mathematics. You are aware that in some year groups, pupils do not present their work neatly, or to a good standard, and that this can affect their accuracy in mathematics.

You have worked in close cooperation with governors, staff and the wider school community to set out your strategic vision as the school moves forward. You have created a shorter term development plan to support the longer term aims of the school. Although the overall objective is to improve pupils' progress, you do not set out specifically how this is to be accomplished. This is because you have not used performance information rigorously enough to give you a clear picture of which particular groups of pupils are at risk of underachieving.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and the staff and governors have established safeguarding as a high priority. Consequently, there is a culture of safety that permeates all aspects of the school's work. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They say that all adults listen to them and take their concerns seriously. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of what constitutes bullying, including that related to the internet, but they say that it is rare in school. The school's records show few reported incidents relate to bullying or to racist behaviour.

Pupils are taught to stay safe from dangers associated with modern technology. They know that it is unwise to divulge personal information when using the internet. They are taught about dangers associated with roads and railways. They know that tobacco and some non-medicinal drugs can be harmful. Pupils also spoke sensitively about emotional health and the need to talk to friends, family or staff at school if they have worries. They appreciate the 'worry box' located in classrooms where they can anonymously voice their concerns.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are of high quality. Systems to check all adults who work at the school, or who visit school, are thorough and meticulous. Several members of the leadership team have been trained as designated safeguarding leads in school. All staff and governors have been trained so that they can act quickly should they have a concern about the safety and welfare of any pupil. Governors are vigilant in checking the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils by ensuring that the correct procedures are followed in a timely manner.

### **Inspection findings**

- In addition to examining the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils, I looked carefully at how well girls and disadvantaged pupils achieve in school and how much progress pupils make in reading. I also looked at the extent to which the quality of teaching helps pupils to make good progress in mathematics and how well school leaders have maintained a good quality of education since the previous inspection.
- Work in pupils' books, as well as performance information recorded by the school, show that there is no difference in the progress made in mathematics by boys and girls. Girls thoroughly enjoy the challenge presented in their mathematics lessons, and so they progress well. They have a good understanding of basic number and are keen to take a full part in mathematics lessons by responding to teachers' questions. They are accurate in their calculations and they show resilience when applying their skills to solve difficult problems.
- School leaders have analysed the assessment information for girls who took the national tests in reading in 2016. They found that a number of girls in this group had particular needs that impacted on their performance on the day of the test. They have tracked the progress of girls across the school and found that they make progress that is equal to, or better than, that of boys. In school, girls read confidently and fluently and respond to teachers' questions that call for prediction, inference and deduction.
- One of the key priorities for school leaders is to close the gap in attainment and progress between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils. To this end, they have appointed an additional teacher to work with small groups of pupils to help them with their academic work and build their confidence. All teachers know their disadvantaged pupils and they ensure that support is carefully targeted towards their individual needs. The most recent information shows that the difference in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of others is diminishing, as the actions of leaders take effect.

- Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading and they say that they would like to spend more time in the school library, as it is one of their favourite places. They say that they read frequently in class as part of English lessons, and as part of the wider curriculum. Even in mathematics, pupils are expected to read and understand written problems independently and this provides additional opportunities for them to practise their skills. Leaders have provided training so that teachers now spend more time developing pupils' comprehension of what they are reading. Current performance information shows that this is leading to pupils making rapid progress in reading. Just occasionally, books provided for pupils to read are too difficult and this slows their progress.
- The new leader for mathematics has taken decisive steps to improve pupils' outcomes in mathematics. He has provided training for teachers that has enabled them to fully embed the principles of the new curriculum for mathematics. This has led to clear improvements in the way in which they assess pupils' understanding and adapt work or provide additional challenge. Work in pupils' books shows a high quality of dialogue between the teacher and individual pupils, and this helps to move learning forward at a rapid pace.
- School leaders and governors have embraced the opportunities arising from the expansion of the school by increasing leadership capacity to continue to improve teaching. Consequently, although it is not yet outstanding, the quality of teaching is enabling pupils to progress well across the school. Leaders at all levels visit classrooms frequently to support and guide teachers to help them to improve their skills. They have provided training to improve teachers' questioning skills so that they are better equipped to probe pupils' understanding and deepen their learning. There is now a much stronger emphasis on how effectively teaching is bringing about real learning, as well as promoting positive learning behaviours including resilience, curiosity and stamina.
- The curriculum is thoughtfully planned to give pupils interesting topics that inspire their imaginations. It has been revised to provide more opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical and literacy skills in other subjects.
- School leaders and governors are ambitious and have created a culture in which teachers and pupils are encouraged to take risks and to try out new ideas. Consequently, they are all partners in learning. Leaders welcome the high level of challenge from external support and governors, and this helps them to develop their plans with confidence. Together, they have established a sense of cohesion and purpose that gives a strong direction to the school. This demonstrates a strong capacity for further improvement.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teachers insist that pupils always present work in their books to the highest possible standard
- reading books provided for pupils match their reading ability

- robust use is made of all performance information to set objectives showing precisely how the school will increase pupils' rates of progress further.

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

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I joined you and your deputy headteacher to see pupils working in nine classrooms. I looked at work in pupils' books and listened to some of them reading. I held meetings with a group of pupils, school leaders and five governors, including the chair of governors. I also met with a representative from the local authority. I scrutinised a variety of documents, including those showing how the school keeps pupils safe. I analysed the 188 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and took into account the 21 responses to the staff survey. I spoke informally to parents at the beginning of the school day.