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Mrs Wendy-May Foster  
Headteacher  
Wareside Church of England Primary School  
Reeves Green  
Wareside  
Ware  
Hertfordshire  
SG12 7QR

Dear Mrs Foster

### **Short inspection of Wareside Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 March 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 March 2013.

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

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

Most parents are pleased with the education you are providing for their children. They are pleased with the way the school is led and managed, and the good progress their children are making as a result of good teaching. A few parents expressed concern about the changes of teacher in such a small school. I found that you, your staff and governors, have done your very best to minimise the impact of this on pupils' learning and well-being. As a result, pupils are continuing to make good progress in response to good teaching. Parents told me how secure their children feel and described how happy they are in school.

You, your leaders and governors have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development, and this is helping you to sustain a good education for your pupils. You have identified key priorities for further improvement in your well-conceived school development plan. Staff morale is high and all share the same commitment and dedication in wanting the best for the pupils. The work you and your staff are doing in providing a good education for the pupils is enabling them to develop confidence in learning and prepares them well for secondary school when they leave Year 6.

Pupils' behaviour remains good and they continue to have good attitudes to

learning. Nursery and Reception children in the early years settle into their routines quickly and thoroughly enjoy their indoor and outdoor learning activities. Pupils in Year 1 continue to achieve well in phonics, with a year-on-year increase in the proportion reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 2 build on this work, with most reaching the standards expected for their ages and some working in greater depth. Pupils' progress continues as they move through the school and, by the end of Year 6, they are achieving as well as other pupils nationally. In every lesson we visited, in pupils' books and work on display, we saw them focusing on their learning and trying their best.

You were appointed as headteacher shortly after the last inspection and you have managed the high turnover of staff well since then. You have developed the school grounds and the learning environments of the early years, so that they are more stimulating and promote curiosity and enjoyment of learning. For example, you have developed an orchard and 'values tree' for pupils in the playground, where the values being promoted for the week are pinned to the tree. You have also developed a vegetable garden area for the early years, where children are going to pick the crops, prepare them and serve them to their parents during their 'teddy bears' picnic' at the end of the summer term.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You, your staff and governors, are developing a strong culture for safeguarding and work very hard together to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils, including children in the early years. You ensure that all staff training is up to date and you make thorough checks on the suitability of staff and visitors to work with children, in line with legal requirements. All staff have received the latest guidance on keeping children safe and have signed to confirm that they have read it.

I checked how well you are implementing your policies on safeguarding, including your child protection, e-safety, anti-bullying and health and safety policies. I could see these were very detailed and met up-to-date requirements, and were effectively implemented. There are very few incidents of bullying recorded and no recorded incidents of harassment of any kind since the last inspection. Your staff maintain high levels of supervision in all areas of the school throughout the day and you provide clear guidance to pupils on how to stay safe. As a result, they use the internet and computers safely and handle equipment with care.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the previous inspection, it was recommended that teachers challenge the learning of higher attainers and provide pupils with more information about how to improve their learning. A key focus for my inspection, therefore, related to how consistently teachers were using assessment information to plan activities and set targets which deepened the thinking of most-able pupils. I also wanted to see if they were using this information to set challenging targets for them. You have successfully addressed this area for improvement and are now ensuring

that improved systems for assessment are used consistently by recently appointed staff.

- On our joint visits to classrooms, we saw teachers providing extension activities in lessons to deepen the thinking of most-able pupils. However, occasionally, staff were not moving on the more able pupils quickly enough to the more challenging activities they had planned in lessons, to extend their learning. Pupils were also working towards the clear and challenging 'I can' targets set to extend their learning. We also saw this in their work, where the most able pupils were working at a deeper level. Your scrutiny of pupils' work over the past two terms has shown that this is now consistent. Pupils select creative homework tasks, such as designing and making games, which enable them to apply and develop their problem-solving skills. Your accurate assessment information enables you to track the progress all pupils are making. It shows that the most able are making equally good progress from their higher starting points as other groups of pupils.
- A second key line of enquiry, stemming from the findings of the previous inspection, concerned whether all pupils were given guidance as to the next steps in their learning, in line with the school's marking policy. I wanted to know if pupils were responding to the advice offered to them. You are continuously monitoring how well teachers are using the school's marking system to improve pupils' learning. When we looked at pupils' work together, we found teachers are consistently using the school's system to inform pupils of their next steps in learning. We also saw that pupils are responding to the clear guidance teachers are giving, in correcting their own work and not repeating the same mistakes again. Teachers' consistent use of the marking policy has also enabled them to identify more challenging targets for all pupils.
- Another key line of enquiry focused on the progress, over time, of current pupils, including children in the early years, as I wanted to see whether they are making good progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Your accurate information about the progress children are making in the early years shows that they are nearly all on course to achieve a good level of development by the end of the summer term. They are making good progress in each area of learning from their starting points. We observed children in the early years greatly enjoying their learning and making good progress. We saw Nursery children enthusiastically making 'flapjacks' and 'cupcakes' in the mud kitchen. Reception children also compared the different lengths of their cut-out snakes against a number line and then discussed which was the longest and which was the shortest, before placing them in order.
- At key stages 1 and 2, this good progress from pupils' different starting points continues. Your accurate assessment information shows that 100% of pupils at key stage 1 are working within age-related expectations and making at least expected progress, with some pupils working at greater depth. This good progress continues across key stage 2, where nearly all pupils are working at age-related expectations and all are making at least good progress. The few disadvantaged pupils, including the very small number of most-able disadvantaged, are making good progress and doing as well as other pupils. This is because you are using pupil premium funding effectively to provide one-to-one support for literacy and numeracy. The very small number of pupils who have

special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points, because they are benefiting from good support to develop their basic skills. Our scrutiny of pupils' work and displays showed that pupils across the school are making good progress in their history, geography and science topics. They have measured rainfall accurately, created Viking runes in their research on the Anglo Saxons and are developing their skills of scientific investigation.

- I also focused on how you are spending the additional funding for disadvantaged children in the early years, to see if this is making any difference to their learning and well-being. You are clearly using this funding well to provide a specialist support programme for those few children who are making slow progress in physical development. As a result, they can now throw a ball and can climb obstacles safely with help. You are also spending some of this additional funding on helping a small number of disadvantaged children to improve their basic skills of communication, language and literacy, and in their personal and social development. Their learning journals show they are making good progress in these areas and becoming increasingly confident in their learning.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Staff consistently ensure that the most able pupils quickly move on to the more challenging activities teachers have planned in lessons to deepen their thinking.

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

Yours sincerely

Declan McCarthy  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, your leaders and five governors, including the chair, to discuss the school's improvement since the previous inspection. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I held a meeting with your staff and met eight parents who were collecting their children from school, to seek their views. I also considered the 42 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 12 text responses. I looked at your safeguarding and child protection procedures, your records of assessing any potential risks to children, the records of the checks you make on the suitability of staff and regular visitors, and your records of training. I scrutinised the attendance figures, exclusion rates and logs of incidents relating to behaviour and the use of physical intervention. I examined a variety of sources of information, including your school development plan, minutes of

governors' meetings and assessment information. I undertook joint visits to lessons indoors and outdoors with you. I talked to pupils and looked at their work.