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Mr Mark Everett
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Dear Mr Everett

Short inspection of St Peter's CofE Academy

Following my visit to the school on 25 April 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 your predecessor 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 because all staff, teaching and non-teaching, work together as a cohesive team to improve the school. A key strength of the school is the candour of leaders' self-evaluation and its direct link to a manageable improvement plan with priorities that staff and governors have agreed. There is a strong sense of teamwork and a shared determination that St Peter's should equip pupils as thoughtful and capable young citizens.

Since your appointment as headteacher in September 2015, you have taken well-considered steps to develop the school as a vibrant hub of the community and a progressive member of the Diocese of Bristol School Trust (DBAT). Together with staff, governors and pupils, you have defined the core values of the school, 'caring, forgiving, respecting, sharing our journey together and questioning', which come together in the overall vision of, 'The child first and always'. These values are considered deeply by pupils and they take their responsibilities to uphold the values seriously. Older pupils nurture younger ones and actively find ways to help improve the school and the local community.

Individual differences are valued in this inclusive community in which everyone's talents are celebrated. Many after-school activities help pupils' holistic development. For example, pupils enjoyed taking part in taekwondo after school.

Your teaching team is strong. In the Ofsted questionnaire, and in conversations with

teachers, many staff praised the quality of professional development that they receive and the strong mutual support of other teachers, both in the school and in the DBAT. Many stated that they feel privileged and proud to work at St Peter's.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They feel that their opinions are valued and acted upon. Parents who spoke to me were very happy with the quality of education that their children are receiving. They particularly value your ambition for their children. Parents' views reflect how the nurturing environment in your school helps children to develop their confidence and make good progress.

Pupils enjoy coming to the school. They are enthusiastic about their learning and they value the help and support they receive from their teachers and other adults. Pupils take great pride in their work. They delight in showing their 'proudest piece of work' and describe why they are proud. All the pupils who spoke to me, or responded to the online questionnaire, would recommend the school to another pupil.

The school benefits from strong governance and the good links with the DBAT board. Governors possess the necessary skills and expertise to support and challenge you and other leaders. The recently formed teaching, learning and assessment committee monitors how effectively the improvement plan is driving the school forward. This committee also plans strategically for the future to ensure that the school is well prepared to meet any challenges ahead.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to ensure that pupils, particularly the most able, were being challenged. Pupils of all abilities throughout the school are now routinely challenged. Pupils respond very positively to the high expectations that their teachers have of them.

A second area for improvement identified at the previous inspection related to the quality of teaching throughout the school. Since then, leaders have developed high-calibre staff, through coaching and mentoring, who are reflective practitioners and developed the work of middle leaders who are committed to doing their best for their pupils. You have made good use of the academy trust and the opportunity to share good practice and to discuss effective teaching.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding at St Peter's is taken extremely seriously and the vigilance of the staff is paramount. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of good quality. You know this because you have recently undertaken an external safeguarding audit. All staff understand their shared responsibility to keep children safe. They have taken part in a range of training to keep their knowledge and skills up to date. You give all staff regular safeguarding updates. You, as the main designated safeguarding lead, the deputy headteacher and the parent support worker update your training regularly.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. They demonstrated their knowledge of online bullying and internet

'grooming' and their confidence in what they would do if they saw something on their computer that made them feel uneasy. Pupils are happy at the school and say that there is no bullying, but that if there was any, 'the staff deal with it quickly'. They have complete confidence in their teachers and classroom assistants being able to sort out any worries or problems that they share with them.

Inspection findings

- Our first agreed line of enquiry focused on raising attainment in mathematics, especially for girls at key stage 2. Your analysis of the 2016 results showed that attainment in key stage 1 was below the national average and in key stage 2 girls' attainment had been below that of boys. Through closer monitoring, peer support for teachers and looking at pupils' work, you identified the issues that had caused this result. You have raised teachers' awareness of the issue of girls not being fully engaged in mathematics lessons as a major barrier to their learning. They were not being challenged or supported sufficiently to use their knowledge and skills. Through training, teachers have developed questioning skills in mathematics to encourage pupils to explain and to reason.
- Teachers now plan more opportunities for all pupils, including the most able, to use their knowledge to solve problems in mathematics. Pupils relish the challenge that this brings and they show determination and resilience as they think harder about their work. For example, Year 5 pupils confidently explained how they could prove that the difference between two odd numbers never results in an odd number. Most able pupils went on to prove that this applies also to negative numbers. We agreed that there is now a need to extend pupils further, especially the most able, across the school so that more pupils reach a greater depth in learning in mathematics.
- A focus on pupils' reading and phonics in key stage 1, especially of the emerging group of boys, was a second line of enquiry. Analysis revealed that pupils make average progress overall in reading at key stage 2 and reach expected attainment at key stage 1. However, boys who start key stage 1 with lower attainment were not making the progress they were capable of and this was a concern to the school. You are determined to raise standards in reading so that all pupils learn to read well. As a result, you have enabled staff to visit other schools, in the trust and locally, to see different methods of teaching phonics. Staff, including teaching assistants, have undergone specific intense precision training to develop skills further. You monitor pupils in Year 2 to ensure that they receive additional support to improve their reading and catch up quickly.
- These changes have successfully boosted the skills of pupils who narrowly missed achieving the national standard when they were in Year 1. They are now well placed for success in Year 2. The teaching of phonics is systematic and well organised. A range of well-chosen resources helps pupils to learn about letters and sounds. We observed children in the early years excitedly using the 'magic pencil' to write in the air the words they were reading. In key stage 1, pupils built on their early knowledge to recognise spelling patterns and examined 'nonsense words'. Their teacher was careful to ensure that pupils pronounced words correctly as they wrote and read them. When listening to pupils read, it is clear

that they are learning skills to help them make rapid progress. They read frequently and by Year 6 pupils are fluent and confident readers with a love of reading. The school's own assessments and monitoring show that a high proportion of pupils are on track to achieve the standards expected of them in reading in Year 2. We agreed that the school should continue to develop boys' achievement by creating more opportunities to encourage their writing and thereby raise their achievement.

- We agreed to consider what the school is doing to raise the achievement of boys in the early years, as they attain below the level of the girls. There has been a change of leadership in this area since the previous inspection. The school is making better use of early years assessment information to challenge key stage 1 pupils to make faster progress and to identify children for intervention at an earlier stage. This has raised staff expectation of children's ability and developed an expectation that children will reach higher attainment. There has been a drive to develop boys' interests so that they will want to write and read more. A variety of topics has been chosen, such as 'pirates', to encourage boys to build and write well. A member of staff who focuses on helping children who are behind in reading has obtained new resources specifically to encourage boys' reading and reports that it is having a positive impact. Children clearly enjoy this change as they talked eagerly about their buildings and the constructions that they had made.
- Finally, I focused on the attendance of the disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The published attendance information indicates that these groups have higher than average persistent absence. There are valid medical reasons behind most of this absence, often recorded appointments. Pupil's attendance is tracked carefully and supported where necessary. The school has put in successful measures to improve the attendance of individual pupils, which this year is better than last year, especially for the focused groups.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the challenge to pupils across the school, especially the most able, is raised further so that more reach greater depth in mathematics
- boys' achievement in writing is raised by continuing to create more opportunities to develop and encourage their writing skills, in the early years and key stage 1.

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

Yours sincerely

Terry Mortimer
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your senior leadership team and other staff members, including your special educational needs coordinator. The inspection also involved a meeting with the chair of governors, a member of the DBAT board and five other governors as well as speaking with the school improvement officer. There were 35 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 11 responses to the staff questionnaire, as well as 30 responses to the pupil questionnaire. Parents' views were sought when they brought their children to school. We visited all the classrooms together, to observe pupils' learning and talk to them about it. We observed work by pupils with a range of abilities, in mathematics and English and in topics. I listened to a range of pupils reading. A wide range of documentation and information relating to your self-evaluation, school improvement planning, equalities, assessment, monitoring and evaluation, and safeguarding was also examined.