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Mr Karnavas
Executive Principal
The Canterbury Primary School
City View
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Dear Mr Karnavas

Short inspection of The Canterbury Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 May 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 May 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders continue to move the school forward with shared aims and high aspirations. You know the school well. Directors are supportive and have restructured recently to work more closely with yourself and the leadership team. Staff enjoy working at the school and welcome the range of training opportunities provided.

The school is welcoming. Close teamwork ensures that all pupils are known as individuals and receive effective support. Leaders and staff track pupils' progress carefully and provide them with appropriate help when required. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and behave well. Cavendish, the on-site unit for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder, provides focused support for the pupils in its care. The unit demonstrates your commitment to providing education for the whole community.

During my time in the school, I observed polite and attentive pupils taking part in a range of engaging activities. Children in the Reception classes enjoyed learning new sounds because the staff made learning fun. In a phonics lesson, for example, the children were clearly amused as they learned to work out the sounds of letters written on 'post-it' notes stuck to their foreheads. Older pupils revelled in using junk materials to create a model of an island with a range of facilities for its inhabitants. Pupils spoke happily and confidently about their school. They were eager to talk

about additional opportunities provided, such as your performing arts provision, and the chance to question a visiting NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) scientist.

At the time of the last inspection, inspectors highlighted the many strengths of the school, including the shared determination to improve, the quality of teaching resulting from effective professional development, pupils' good progress overall, and pupils' good behaviour. Inspectors also identified the need to accelerate the progress of pupils, especially the most able, by ensuring that lessons consistently meet the needs of all pupils. The school now has aspirations for all to succeed. This aim is supported by the careful tracking of pupils' progress and the use of well-coordinated and well-targeted extra help for those pupils who have specific additional needs.

Since the last inspection, leaders have continued the process of rigorous self-evaluation to identify priorities for school improvement. You were able to describe the school's many strengths, as well as the areas that need to be improved. You have identified rightly that raising broad achievement in writing, particularly for boys, is a priority. As we discussed, the directors are well informed about the school's developments. However, the recent restructuring has meant that the new mini-board of directors (the local governing body) is still refining its skills in holding leaders to account.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils are safe and that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are trained appropriately. Records are up to date and show that suitable action is taken to keep pupils safe. A group of directors has recently started to check that safeguarding is effective across the academy.

The curriculum teaches pupils how to stay safe, and they talk confidently about road safety, e-safety and 'stranger danger'. Pupils know they can speak to staff if they have any concerns. They are supervised well throughout the day. As a result, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and say that they feel safe. The majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire are confident their children are safe at school. However, a small group of parents are concerned about how the school manages bullying. There was no evidence to substantiate these concerns.

Inspection findings

- A review of assessment data and workbooks and visits to classrooms show that most-able pupils, both boys and girls, are making strong progress overall in writing. Pupils told me they enjoy writing and they have the chance to write in a range of styles. The curriculum has been reviewed recently to ensure that writing is linked meaningfully to topics of interest to both boys and girls. For example, some pupils wrote persuasive letters about sweatshops to an international retailer. Pupils discussed strategies to make their writing more effective. Leaders agree that there is more work to do, however. Some pupils are not doing as well

as they could due to common basic errors, such as missing out capital letters, using incorrect spellings, or composing letters without a date or address.

- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are supported well. Their progress is tracked closely and appropriate support is put in place when needed. Additional funding provided to the school is used carefully to pay for extra activities, such as an effective programme to help key stage 1 pupils catch up in mathematics. As a result, the majority of disadvantaged pupils make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the past, not all Year 2 pupils, especially boys, have been reaching the expected standard in phonics. Leaders recognise, rightly, that they need to accelerate progress in phonics further. Staff have had additional training and now share good practice with each other. There are high expectations in the Reception Year. For example, children were practising the challenging task of matching the sounds 'ck', 'ss' and 'll' to their corresponding letters. These higher expectations are now also evident in key stage 1. Consequently, current information shows that pupils' attainment in phonics in Years 1 and 2 is closer to the expectations for their age.
- Leaders monitor pupils' attendance closely. Current overall attendance of pupils is similar to that of other schools nationally. Effective steps are taken to challenge and support families of a few pupils who have low levels of attendance, and those who are absent for long periods. Pupils appreciate the certificates and other rewards that they receive for attending regularly. Pupils know it is important to attend school. One pupil said, 'If I don't attend, I miss out.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in writing, especially that of boys, accelerates further, and their use of good handwriting, spelling, grammar, punctuation and other writing conventions increases
- the mini-board of directors holds leaders to account more effectively, through a sharper focus on priorities for improvement.

I am copying this letter to the executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Addison
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, other senior leaders, three directors, and the executive principal. I visited all classrooms and the unit for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder, with senior leaders. I talked to pupils and looked at their work. I looked at a range of writing books from key stage 2 and mathematics books from key stage 1, and heard some pupils read. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school. I took account of 39 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 21 written free-text responses. I considered six online responses to questionnaires from staff and 26 responses to the pupil survey. I scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. I looked at the school's website, safety records, minutes of meetings, records of visits from external advisers and information about pupils' progress.