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Mrs Alison Cole  
Headteacher  
St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Coggeshall  
Myneer Park  
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CO6 1YU

Dear Mrs Cole

### **Short inspection of St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Coggeshall**

Following my visit to the school on 24 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 December 2012.

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

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

Most parents are very positive in their Parent View questionnaire responses and would recommend the school to others. They are generally pleased with the education you provide for their children and rightly believe they make good progress as a result of effective teaching. One parent typically commented, 'St Peter's is a fantastic school, with staff and parents all trying to create the best possible environment to grow and nurture the local children.'

You, along with your senior leaders and governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection by ensuring greater consistency in teachers' marking, in line with the school's policy, and higher expectations for pupils' learning. Leaders, staff and governors have improved their understanding of data and are using this effectively to raise achievement. As a result, pupils' achievement across the school is good. The school's assessment information shows that pupils are making good progress from their different starting points. The special educational needs coordinator is providing a range of additional support to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their particular starting points; this is an

improvement on last year.

You have developed strong teamwork among the staff, and their morale is high. In their questionnaire responses, staff commented how proud they are to work in the school. They want the best for their pupils and share your drive for continuous improvement in promoting pupils' learning and well-being. As a result, pupils become confident learners as they move through the school and are well prepared for transfer to secondary school. Your staff are providing a range of activities to enrich pupils' learning, such as visits from theatre groups, a residential trip, visits from historical, scientific and mathematics groups, and activities within the local church community. Pupils' behaviour across the school remains good. They are polite and courteous to visitors and maintain good relationships with others. They have good attitudes to learning and this is reflected in their good attendance and high rates of participation in school activities.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Your leadership team and governors have ensured that all safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. Staff provide high levels of supervision throughout the day and the school grounds are safe and secure. Pupils rightly say they feel safe in school and parents, staff and governors agree. One parent commented, 'I think you would be hard pressed to find a school that cares more for the well-being of its pupils.' Pupils were seen adopting safe practices in school, using computers and handling equipment safely. They played safely in the playground and moved from one area of the school to another in an orderly fashion. All staff training in child protection is up to date and the procedures for checking the suitability of staff and visitors to work with children are rigorous. Leaders carefully assess all potential risks to pupils when they engage in activities in school or in the community. You have effective systems in place to track the attendance of pupils. You work successfully with parents to promote good attendance and reduce the rate of absence.

### **Inspection findings**

- I checked that teachers were using assessment information effectively in their planning to enable middle-attaining boys and girls to achieve as well as their classmates in English and mathematics. The published results in 2016 showed that this group of pupils in Year 6 were significantly underperforming in all subjects in comparison with other pupils in the school. In separate discussions, you and your governors confirmed that the earlier teacher assessments, when these pupils were in Year 2, were overgenerous and clearly accounted for this discrepancy in their achievement. This unhelpful assessment masked their strong progress.
- During our joint lesson visits to classes, we saw how effectively teachers were using the information about pupils' prior learning to match activities to different levels of ability, including the middle attainers. Pupils' English and mathematics work showed that middle-attaining boys and girls were making equally good progress. They were developing good skills in the use of punctuation, grammar

and poetic devices in their writing. They were making equally good progress in converting fractions into decimals and percentages in mathematics and using problem-solving techniques to develop a board game. The school's accurate information about pupils' progress also shows that middle attainers are all working within the expectations for their ages and some are working at greater depth in English and mathematics. Middle-attaining boys and girls said they were making good progress and found their learning tasks challenging. However, a few higher-attaining girls and boys said that they were occasionally given work which was too easy, which was also seen in their books.

- A key focus for the inspection related to how well teaching assistants were supporting the development of disadvantaged pupils' phonics skills for reading and writing. Our visits to the Reception and key stage 1 classes showed that teaching assistants provided good support in developing pupils' skills in phonics. They encouraged pupils to blend sounds together to read aloud and write new words accurately using their knowledge of phonics. Disadvantaged pupils were seen participating enthusiastically, with good support, in a snakes and ladders game to consolidate their learning in phonics. The school's data shows that 80% of current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are on course to reach the required standard in the phonics screening check. You have ensured that all staff have received up-to-date training in the teaching of phonics and, as a result, teaching assistants are more confident and skilful in supporting pupils. Your governors are successfully challenging the school's work on the impact of phonics training for staff to ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making good progress.
- I looked at how effectively leaders were reducing the rates of persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special education needs and/or disabilities. I wanted to know if the measures they were taking were promoting their well-being and safety and enabling them to achieve their potential. The published performance data showed significantly low attendance of disadvantaged pupil and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in Year 6 in 2016. Your detailed analysis of these attendance figures showed that a significant number of disadvantage pupils were also identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, and many of these had medical conditions which resulted in long periods of absence for therapy or hospital treatment. Nevertheless, their attendance is improving rapidly as a result of close and effective work with parents and rigorous checking that none of your pupils are missing from education. Your figures for the past three years show a steady rise in attendance, with a low rate of current persistent absence.
- I also examined how well governors and leaders were using the additional pupil premium funding in raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged. You have reviewed the impact of spending of the pupil premium funding using the 2016 results. You have produced a detailed report to look at the reasons for underachievement of disadvantaged pupils and identified further strategies to overcome their barriers to learning, which are already proving effective. The school's data shows that disadvantaged pupils are doing better than in 2016, with most making equally good progress as their classmates. Nearly all of the 11 most able disadvantaged pupils across the school

are working at greater depth than their classmates. Governors are asking key questions about the use of pupil premium funding and its impact and consequently holding the school effectively to account for this spending. However, it is not clear how part of the additional pupil premium funding has been targeted to overcome the weaknesses in the performance of disadvantaged pupils in the Year 1 phonics check.

- Finally, I wanted to know how effectively governors and leaders were ensuring that the website was up to date and compliant. You and your governors showed me how you carefully monitor the website to ensure that it meets requirements. You were able to show the detailed and up-to-date information you provide to parents on your website, such as the summer term topics at each key stage. Your governors ensure that the school's policies are up to date and available for parents on the website.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers consistently use the prior learning of a few of the most able pupils, who say that their work is sometimes too easy, to deepen their thinking and maximise their progress
- the school's use of additional pupil premium funding takes full account of the relative weaknesses in the performance of disadvantaged pupils, particularly in phonics, as seen in published data.

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. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Declan McCarthy  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and governors to discuss the progress made since the previous inspection. I held telephone discussions with a representative of the local authority. I examined your safeguarding policies and procedures, including records of assessing potential risks to pupils, your vetting procedures to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children, records of staff training and attendance figures. I also looked at a range of other information, including assessment information, your school self-evaluation document, your school development plan and minutes of governors' meetings. I took account of the 78 questionnaire responses and 38 free-text responses to Parent View, the 26 staff responses to their questionnaire and the 73 questionnaire responses from pupils. I undertook joint visits to lessons with you and looked at the work pupils were doing. I also spoke to pupils about their learning.