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Dear Mrs Woodgate

Short inspection of Selsted Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 June 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school has been through significant changes since that inspection. Despite this, you have sustained the good teaching and outcomes, building a culture based on high expectations. You, together with leaders and governors, have not lost sight of the school's core values of 'friendship, thankfulness, trust, peace, respect and generosity' that underpin the quality of education at the school. As one parent wrote: 'This school has just got better and better in the years since my children have been there. They are doing so well and are so happy.'

Pupils enjoy school. They are polite, keen to talk about their learning and supportive of each other. They take their learning seriously and love a challenge. Pupils' good behaviour in classrooms enables teachers to focus on learning without any unnecessary interruptions. The learning environment is bright and attractive with stimulating displays of pupils' work around every corner, celebrating pupils' effective learning. Subject leaders have carefully considered the interests of pupils and have written a curriculum to make learning exciting and enriched through a variety of interesting activities. These experiences are valued by pupils who also spoke with enthusiasm, for example, about the range of sports opportunities available to them and the chance to take part in school teams.

You lead the staff team well. You have developed the quality of teaching so that there is now a much stronger focus on how well pupils are learning. You and your leaders check

pupils' work regularly and carefully. You provide additional training for leaders and teachers who need it, and leadership capacity is steadily growing in the school. You have developed strong links with other local schools, providing opportunities for your staff to see good work in other schools and share ideas about effective practice. Your staff have embraced these changes and this is reflected in the improved work seen in pupils' writing and mathematics books. One member of staff wrote of the headteacher: 'She inspires us to be innovative, to take risks and consequently all staff feel empowered.'

You work closely with your staff and governors to set out your vision for the school. You have a clear grasp of what the school does well and where further improvements are needed. However, the checks you intend to use to measure the success of the school's actions are not explicit in the school's plans. You have addressed the areas for improvement raised in the last inspection, and as a result, pupils are now making better progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. The high standards seen in writing and mathematics books are not always transferred to the other curriculum subjects.

School leaders and governors are ambitious for the school's success and have created an ethos in which teachers and pupils are encouraged to try out new ideas. Consequently, the whole school community is committed to learning. You have established a sense of togetherness and purpose and this gives a strong direction to the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors see safeguarding as a high priority and have ensured that the school's arrangements for safeguarding and keeping pupils safe are thorough. This includes checks on the suitability of staff. Leaders ensure that statutory policies are up to date and that staff have read them and understand their responsibilities. Records show that the appropriate safeguarding checks have been followed. All staff have the relevant training so that they can, and do, act quickly and correctly if a concern is raised about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Work with the local authority and other external agencies is well organised and this ensures that the right help is brought into school when needed.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They say that adults listen to them if they have a problem and that any concerns get sorted out. Pupils know what bullying is, including what might happen on the internet. They know that they should not share personal information when online. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens in school. The school's records show that any reported incidents of bullying are properly recorded and appropriate action is taken.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I looked at: how effectively leaders, including governors, have improved the teaching in the school, especially in writing and mathematics; how much progress pupils have made from their starting points; and how leaders evaluate the impact of their actions and the success of their initiatives in helping pupils to make good progress.
- The school's leaders have rightly prioritised the achievement of the most able pupils in writing and mathematics as areas for improvement. Last year, the school was

disappointed that no pupils reached the higher standards in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. Leaders have taken prompt action to address this. Teachers have been challenged to improve their teaching and raise their expectations of pupils' capabilities. Recent assessment information and work in current pupils' books show that the most able pupils make good progress in writing and mathematics across the school.

- The school's assessment system provides a good range of information about how well pupils are progressing. School leaders regularly analyse the data and are aware of any pupil or groups of pupils who are not making the progress they are capable of. Regular meetings enable leaders and teaching staff to intervene quickly where necessary. Support arrangements have become increasingly effective in providing extra help during lessons, different materials to support learning and extra time for learning. Teaching staff are very clear about what a pupil needs to learn next to achieve success, and provide focused and well-considered direction. Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to fund a mentoring programme that is valued by the pupils. They appreciate the personal time with adults and say that it helps them with their learning in class.
- The curriculum has been thoughtfully planned to give pupils interesting topics that inspire their imaginations. This is evident in the good-quality work in pupils' writing and mathematics books and in displays of work around the school. It is also seen in the high level of interest and engagement seen in lessons. Pupils are eager to talk about their work and explain what they are learning. Older pupils know how adults help them with their learning. The curriculum gives pupils the opportunity to practise their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects, but pupils do not always transfer the high-quality skills they have learned, particularly in writing, to their other work.
- Leaders have taken decisive steps to improve teachers' skills and curriculum knowledge. Teachers have embraced opportunities to visit, share and learn from other local schools, seeking out expertise, for example in sport, to help them achieve greater depth in their subject knowledge. Consequently, teaching continues to improve and enables pupils to progress well. Leaders check their work on new initiatives regularly to see if they are helping pupils learn. One successful strategy has been an emphasis on developing pupils' positive learning behaviours, curiosity and stamina for learning. Leaders are not afraid to abandon or change a strategy if they have evidence that it is not working.
- Leaders' plans to improve the school even further are not as clear as they could be.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school improvement plan includes steps to measure the success of actions, linked to expected gains in pupil progress
- standards in writing are consistently high across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Phillips
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and members of your leadership team. I met the governors and a range of school staff. I considered the 32 responses that parents had posted to Ofsted's confidential online survey, Parent View. I took into account the 13 responses to the staff survey and reviewed the 56 responses from pupils. I scrutinised a variety of documents, including those showing how the school keeps pupils safe. I also met with a representative from the local authority. You led me on a tour of the school and together we observed learning in all year groups. I spoke to pupils in lessons, at lunchtime and around the school. In addition to looking at pupils' work in lessons, I scrutinised a sample of pupils' books to evaluate rates of progress.