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20 October 2017

Miss Rachael Osborne  
Headteacher  
St Jude's CofE Primary School  
St Nicholas Street  
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Hampshire  
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Dear Miss Osborne

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Jude's CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 9 October 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- close the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally
- ensure that consistently effective teaching, especially across key stage 1, develops self-reliant learners who make rapid progress over time.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, other school leaders, and groups of governors and pupils. I spoke to a representative of the Portsmouth Teaching School Alliance about their work to support the school on behalf of the local authority. Along with you and your deputy headteacher, I visited lessons in Years 2, 4 and 6 to observe learning. I considered a wide range of documentary evidence on the school's website and that provided by leaders. I also reviewed the school's central record of recruitment checks on adults working in the school.

## **Context**

At the time of the last inspection, the special educational needs coordinator had recently joined the school, and the deputy headteacher's appointment had just been made permanent. Since then, two part-time teachers have moved on to take up different roles in other schools. One other teacher joined the school in October 2016. A new leader of mathematics was appointed and joined the school in September 2017. A number of temporary support staff have left the school, and the roles of other support staff have been restructured.

## **Main findings**

Leaders evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately, using a wide range of relevant evidence. You and your deputy headteacher work effectively together to lead the school on its journey of development. You have high expectations of staff, who demonstrate a shared understanding of the school's priorities. Middle leaders are held increasingly to account for their areas of responsibility. They understand the work that is needed to secure ongoing improvement, so that the pupils are prepared well for the future by the time they leave the school.

Governors have responded effectively and vigorously to the findings of the previous inspection. Recommendations from the promptly commissioned external review of governance have been acted on quickly and effectively. As a result, governors are much better informed about the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They perform their duties with increased rigour and are focused much more clearly on their strategic role. They ensure that their statutory responsibilities are fulfilled regarding staff recruitment checks and the website, and have useful processes in place that help them to monitor these aspects routinely.

Staff use effective systems appropriately to assess and monitor pupils' attainment and progress. They understand individual pupils' needs well and use what they know to help them to plan learning activities carefully. They share leaders' focus on improving outcomes for groups of pupils who most need to catch up, such as the disadvantaged, the most able, and those who speak English as an additional

language. The special educational needs coordinator provides staff with effective support for their work with pupils who have additional needs.

Pupils note how opportunities to support and challenge them with their learning have improved. They value how staff recognise their efforts. In Year 6, in particular, an alternative approach to structuring how reading, writing and mathematics are taught is helping pupils to learn well and make good progress over time. During the inspection, opportunities to develop confidence in using calculation strategies and improving comprehension skills were clearly evident. Pupils described how teachers regularly check what they know and provide useful feedback about next steps in learning that link to future work in lessons. Leaders recognise, however, that teaching is not consistently effective across the school, and that pupils, particularly in the lower part of the school, sometimes lack the skills and independence to persevere or seek help with work that they find difficult and that impedes their progress.

Reading is clearly a strength in the school. Pupils enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about the opportunities to read out loud to an adult and to access the library independently. They took great pride in showing how their book reviews help other pupils in making selections from the library. They say that the choice of books available has improved and appreciate being able to influence which books are ordered when stock changes.

Pupils' current performance information demonstrates effectively how the school is improving. At the end of the last academic year, most headline measures across early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 improved from the previous year, some notably. Pupils currently in the school are making similarly good progress. However, there are some areas where improvements are less evident, such as progress in writing by the end of Year 6, which declined in 2017. Additionally, the proportion of pupils working at a greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 is below national figures. While the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in school is closing, there is further work to do to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils nationally. Leaders understand the specific challenges for disadvantaged pupils at St Jude's, and provide increasingly effective support to meet their needs.

Leaders' thoughtful work has reduced exclusions, particularly for disadvantaged and potentially vulnerable pupils. A considered approach has identified effective behaviour management strategies that pupils find meaningful, so that sanctions make a difference to their future behaviour. Pupils around the school typically conduct themselves well in lessons. They know and understand the expectations for, and consequences of poor, behaviour, as well as valuing how their positive contributions are recognised and rewarded.

## **External support**

The Portsmouth Teaching School Alliance, under the direction of the local authority, provides helpful support that is strengthening the effectiveness of the school. A range of experts work usefully with leaders to develop their strategic understanding and experience. Leaders actively seek opportunities to validate the quality of the school's work. This helps them to identify emerging priorities for future development. An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium has taken place, and leaders identify accurately the further work that is needed to develop this aspect of the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Moles  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**