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Miss Fiona Buchan  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Buchan

### **Short inspection of St Peter and St Paul Church of England Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 14 November 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 2014.

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

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

You and the other senior leaders have ensured that St Peter and St Paul CE Academy is a happy one. Pupils make good gains in their learning and leave well prepared for the challenges of secondary school. This approach is captured in the school's motto, 'Learning for life in a changing world'. The staff are determined that pupils will make good progress, and become hard-working, respectful young people. Pupils I met explained to me that it was a thoroughly good thing that everyone was different. As one pupil explained, 'If we were all the same, we wouldn't each have something special about us.'

You and the other senior leaders have a very clear understanding of the many strengths of the school. You are all aware, too, of the aspects you want to improve further. From these, you, other school leaders, and the governing body have written an effective development plan. This sets out sensible adjustments you will make and shows clearly who will check these, when and how. The plan also sets out how you will measure the success of these actions.

The deputy headteacher is skilled in analysing data about the progress pupils make. He assists the governing body by supplying governors with appropriately detailed information. This enables the governing body to hold you to account. The governing

body is both active and committed to the welfare and success of all pupils. It plays an effective strategic role in ensuring that pupils' achievement continues to improve.

You have successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. For example, teachers now plan work that is more closely matched to the different needs of pupils. Pupils told me how, if they do not understand something, teachers support them by giving them extra help, which builds their confidence. Teachers now give challenging work to the most able pupils. In addition, teachers now check that pupils take note of, and respond to, the guidance that they give to them. Pupils explained that their teachers give them time to do this at the start of the day or in lessons. They said that the guidance they receive helps them to improve their work. You ensure that teachers' assessments are accurate. You have organised meetings between your staff and those of other schools, where they look at and compare samples of pupils' work together.

As a result of consistently effective teaching, pupils make good progress from their starting points. Achievement is rising across the school. Subject leaders for both mathematics and English are helping to improve the quality of teaching further. For instance, they lead meetings that help staff who are less confident to develop a greater understanding of what to expect from pupils of different ages.

Pupils said that they enjoy their lessons, and understand the importance of attending school each day. They said that the work teachers give them is interesting and varied. Classrooms are positive and attractive learning environments. Pupils behave extremely well, cooperate and try their hardest. The early years classrooms provide good opportunities for children to practise their writing but the outdoor environment for the Reception Year does not currently encourage success in this subject. As a result, children do not make rapid progress in their writing.

You, other senior leaders and the governing body are very aware that, over the past three years, pupils' attendance has been below that found nationally. In particular, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent has been far too high. You have taken some effective steps to address this issue. For example, you regularly highlight to parents the need for all pupils to attend regularly. The governing body does not authorise term-time absence, unless in exceptional circumstances. You have also used the services of the trust's education welfare officer to work with those parents whose children do not attend often enough. As a result, pupils' attendance overall is now once again above the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent has fallen by one-third. You agree, however, that the overall attendance of disadvantaged pupils, however, is still not high enough.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and other senior leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are well trained, including in areas such as noting potential extremism in pupils. As a result, they are alert to a wide range of indicators that may suggest a child is being harmed. They understand fully their need to report any

concern to you, no matter how slight. You keep good records of any pupil who is at risk, and make brisk and thorough referrals to outside agencies, such as social care, when these are needed.

Pupils I met during my visit told me that they felt very safe in school. They explained how teachers tell them about a wide range of risks to their safety. Pupils demonstrated a good understanding of what to do if they received an inappropriate message, request or image via a mobile phone.

## **Inspection findings**

- You, other senior leaders and subject leaders keep a close check on the quality of learning in all parts of the school. Leaders conduct regular observation of lessons and make informal visits to classrooms. In addition, leaders scrutinise pupils' work regularly. They meet with different groups of pupils to discuss their learning. As a result, you and other leaders have a very good understanding of where pupils are making the fastest gains. You are also all aware of which teaching needs to be refined so that pupils learn even more rapidly.
- A large majority of children join the Reception Year with skills that are below those typically found in children of a similar age. Staff ensure, however, that children begin to catch up. This is particularly the case for communication and language, where staff model speaking and listening well for children. Children make good gains in their learning overall but their progress is not yet substantial in writing. The early years coordinator has correctly identified that the outdoor environment does not yet provide enough opportunities that encourage children to practise their writing.
- Pupils are making faster progress than they were and standards are continuing to improve. The proportion of pupils who have passed the phonics screening check in Year 1 is now close to that found nationally. The proportions of pupils who have met the expected standards at the end of key stages 1 and 2 are at least at the national average.
- For the past two years, pupils' progress in mathematics across key stage 2 has been in the top 25% of all schools nationally. Pupils make strong progress in this subject because teachers give them good opportunities to reason mathematically and to solve problems. As a result, pupils are confident in mathematics and are able to explain in writing why they have reached their answers.
- The trust has a good understanding of the school, and makes an effective contribution to its continuing improvement. The trust's adviser I met during my visit spoke confidently about the improvements you and the other staff are making, the achievement of pupils, and what further improvements you need to make. An annual visit by an external consultant also provides you with a separate evaluation. You use this well to help you shape the priorities in the school's development plan. For example, his last report identified the need for more pupils to achieve a greater depth of understanding in different subjects. You adjusted teaching and the proportions who have achieved this depth have increased considerably this year, in both key stages 1 and 2.

- You are highly aware that, although the impact of your work to improve attendance is proving effective overall, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is still not high enough. You understand that it is crucial that these pupils are not absent without compelling reasons. You and the governing body are therefore planning to take further and effective steps to deal with this aspect of attendance.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff work with the parents of disadvantaged pupils to improve their attendance at school
- they improve the outdoor learning environment in the early years so that it offers a similarly effective range of opportunities for writing to that found indoors.

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

Yours sincerely

Roary Pownall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met you and shared my lines of enquiry. I also met with members of the governing body, the deputy headteacher, the head of the early years, and the subject leaders for English and for mathematics. I considered the responses of parents from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the school's most recent questionnaire to parents. I scrutinised the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. We visited classes together in the early years and in both key stages. I looked at a sample of pupils' work. I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and its plans for further improvement. I considered a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding and special educational needs. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and met with a group of pupils at breaktime. We visited the school's breakfast club to check that pupils were safe, happy and well looked after.