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Mr Peter Herbert
Headteacher
Moordown St John's Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mr Herbert

Short inspection of Moordown St John's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 January 2018, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good on 15 July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

The school converted as a single academy trust in December 2015 and is a member of the Bournemouth Septenary Umbrella Trust. Since that time, senior leaders have worked effectively with directors of the school to widen the learning experiences provided for pupils and further enhance their achievement. This is evident most notably in mathematics. Pupils' rapid progress, interest and confidence in learning numbers and solving problems reflect strong subject leadership and teaching.

Directors know the school well and fulfil their duties strategically and effectively. They provide strong support and hold you and your leadership team to account with diligence and rigour. With their support, you have provided strong leadership and have continued to review and improve the performance of the school to good effect. You have shared best practice and provided specialist training for staff. Middle leaders now play a strengthened role in bringing about improvement. Together, you ensure that additional funds are used effectively to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Middle leaders are also working effectively, for example to enrich children's learning in Reception classes and enhance physical education across the school.

Pupils say that they enjoy school. They welcome the friendly way that teachers value their ideas and help them learn. Pupils also appreciate the way that teachers

encourage pupils' good behaviour and help those who need extra assistance. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire agree with their children. Parents welcome the school's caring Christian values and would recommend the school to their friends. One parent, reflecting the view of others, wrote, 'The ethos and atmosphere of the school is also excellent, with children always so well behaved and happy to help.'

Safeguarding is effective.

All staff sustain a strong culture of safeguarding. Valuing pupils and their contributions and keeping them safe lie at the heart of the caring relationships that adults promote across the school. Staff provide good guidance and support for pupils and their families when they are facing difficulties at home as well as at school. Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. They liaise well with administrative staff, school directors and external agencies to ensure that records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders and administrative staff ensure that recruitment checks are carried out thoroughly to ensure that all adults who work with pupils are safe to do so. Senior leaders monitor pupils' attendance diligently. This not only ensures that pupils attend well, but also plays a key role in keeping pupils safe. Staff meet frequently to share observations about how to keep pupils safe, especially those considered vulnerable. Staff participate in regular training to keep their knowledge of how to minimise risks to pupils up to date. For example, when questioned about their training, staff showed understanding of the 'Prevent' duty to protect pupils from the risk of radicalisation.

When questioned, pupils confidently express the view that they feel safe and secure at school. They are mindful of how to stay safe and, for example, say that they would not communicate with strangers when using a computer. Play leaders explain how they organise play for younger pupils at breaktimes and also help to keep them safe. The large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire appreciate the work of the school in caring for their children and keeping them safe. One parent captured the views of most when writing, 'My daughter loves her school and all of her teachers. She is well looked after, the school environment is making her feel safe and a valued member of her class.'

Inspection findings

- The inspection checked the work of leaders and teachers in helping pupils across key stage 2 to make the best possible progress in reading and writing.
- School leaders place high importance on developing pupils' writing skills. Across all year groups, current pupils are making good progress. Most attain at least expected standards, with increasing numbers achieving greater depth in their expressive and descriptive writing in response to teachers' raised expectations.
- Current assessments of pupils' writing also show continuing improvement in the way pupils structure sentences and use a wider range of vocabulary. These features are evident both in pupils' English books and in their work in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 5 wrote meaningfully about renewable

sources of energy in science.

- You have rightly identified that pupils' ability to spell words accurately is a weaker aspect of their writing. Consequently, your teachers are now targeting this important element purposefully. You acknowledge, though, that further work needs to be done to help pupils write at greater depth. In particular, some pupils do not consistently spell words accurately.
- Pupils' reading skills are also being developed well, with most pupils making at least good progress from their different starting points. You recognise that, in the past, not all pupils have achieved well enough in reading. This was particularly true for some boys who had previously attained higher than expected standards for their age. You and your leaders are acting decisively to address this issue. For example, you provide more frequent opportunities for pupils to read books and discuss texts at school. You also support, guide and encourage parents so that more feel able to help their children learn by reading regularly at home.
- I examined pupils' attendance and what you have been doing to reduce persistent absence. You and your senior leadership team, well supported by directors, work well together to monitor pupils' attendance and investigate absences. You take rigorous and effective action to deal with particular difficulties affecting a very small number of pupils. Your skilled and supportive involvement and cooperation with parents and external specialists have reduced persistent absence. You use additional funding effectively to promote and improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. This enables them to benefit from the additional support provided for them. Overall, the rate of pupils' attendance continues to be above average.
- Finally, I focused on the work of leaders and teachers in helping disadvantaged pupils to achieve as well as other pupils, especially through early years and into key stage 1.
- Your detailed records and assessments of children's progress show that you have taken decisive action in recent years to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Observations of children's learning in the Reception classes showed their enthusiastic engagement in the widened range of learning experiences that you now provide, both indoors and outside. Checks of the children's recorded work and assessments of their progress show the effective way that teachers adapt learning activities and their support to meet children's different needs. Consequently, over the past year, all disadvantaged children in Reception classes achieved a good level of development. Currently, disadvantaged children in Reception are sustaining similarly good progress.
- You have increased the support given to pupils to assist their transfer from Reception into Year 1 classes. In particular, you have strengthened the help given to disadvantaged pupils, especially those who have SEN and/or disabilities. For example, staff provide additional 'nurture' support to help pupils with social and emotional needs develop confidence and sustain good learning. Recent and current phonics screening checks in Year 1 and assessments at the end of Year 2 also show that disadvantaged pupils achieve well.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that teaching:

- maintains the current emphasis on improving pupils' ability to spell words accurately
- sustains the focus on helping all pupils achieve at a greater depth in reading and writing.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer, the director of education for the Diocese of Winchester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bournemouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alexander Baxter
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. I also consulted with the other staff who have leadership responsibilities. I met with directors of the school and visited classrooms, either with you, the deputy headteacher or the assistant headteacher. We collected and scrutinised samples of pupils' work in books. I talked with individual pupils during visits to classrooms and listened to you hearing pupils read and talking to them about their reading. I observed lunchtime arrangements and talked with pupils and support staff. In addition, I examined a range of documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' attendance, pupils' progress and the school's self-evaluation and development. I took account of 32 responses to the Ofsted online Parent View survey and 32 additional parents' written comments. I also took note of 15 responses to the staff questionnaire and 54 responses by pupils.