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7 March 2018

Mrs Judy King  
Headteacher  
St Andrew's CofE Primary School and Nursery  
Tower Hill  
Much Hadham  
Hertfordshire  
SG10 6DL

Dear Mrs King

### **Short inspection of St Andrew's CofE Primary School and Nursery**

Following my visit to the school on 20 February 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 the school was judged to be good in February 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 have continued to work collaboratively with your leadership team to make learning more interesting and inspiring. The introduction of curriculum topics and the provision of a wide range of purposeful trips and experiences has resulted in pupils finding their lessons fascinating and very enjoyable. One parent spoke for many, saying: 'Their school books are jammed full of work and the tracking of progress and achievement is very apparent and transparent across the board.'

You and the head of school have succeeded in developing an incredibly committed staff team which is passionate about continually improving the standard of education for all pupils. You are providing a clear vision for pupils' academic and social success. You have ensured that staff have strong subject expertise, which has raised the quality of curriculum provision and the quality of innovative, exciting and engaging teaching and learning.

Teaching and support staff work as a strong, united team. Pupils receive tailored support and are highly valued. Close, ongoing collaboration between teaching staff has resulted in successful transition for pupils between phases and year groups. Effective sharing of assessment information means that children's progression to their next stage is well informed and they make strong progress.

The governing body is committed and active in the life of the school. Governors provide strong support for safeguarding and financial oversight; they are equally as determined that outcomes for pupils should improve further and have welcomed the incisive

questioning from the local authority improvement partner which informs their challenge to leaders.

Pupils are eager learners. They work well in pairs and groups to develop their answers and find solutions. Pupils are courteous and well behaved in their classrooms and around the school. There is an ethos of respect which results from the way in which pupils are supported to understand the different views and feelings of others.

You correctly judge the early years provision to be a strength of the school. Strong leadership in early years has ensured that children are well prepared for school life. Through the engaging curriculum and well-structured tasks, children develop independent learning behaviours to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Positive feedback from parents in the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, such as, 'it is clear that St Andrews nursery children are way ahead academically and in being prepared for transition to reception', demonstrates that the school is successful in preparing pupils well for study at key stage 1.

You and your leadership team take effective action where you feel it is necessary. For example, you have improved the effectiveness of teachers' feedback so that pupils are clear about how to improve and what their next steps should be. You acknowledge that pupils do not make rapid progress in every area of the curriculum. However, you and your leadership team have identified this area in your school development plan and have embedded clear strategies and approaches to ensure that activities in every area of the curriculum meet the needs of pupils. You accept that it is too early to see the impact of this approach.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is effective and is a strength of the school. Leaders have a fastidious approach to ensuring that documentation is secure and detailed. Leaders follow through concerns tenaciously to ensure that pupils are safe at all times.

Pupils told me how staff helped them to voice their concerns with ease. For example, a pupil stated that, 'We can talk with someone about anything, even if it is awful or small.' One pupil commented that, 'We all have the right to feel safe all the time.' This was echoed by many others. The combination of very rigorous processes and procedures has led to a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school.

All staff receive safeguarding training alongside regular updates. As a consequence, staff are all aware of the safeguarding expectations and clear about all aspects of child protection. Staff use the referral system effectively and responsibly to raise concerns and create a safe place and ethos for the pupils.

A new digital approach to recording concerns and incidents has further strengthened the school's already robust response to safeguarding matters. The system has also enabled leaders to make links between behaviour, attendance and safeguarding issues.

## Inspection findings

- To ascertain that the school remained good, one of my key lines of enquiry, as reported above, was about how well leaders ensure that pupils are safe both in school and beyond. This is a strength of the school.
- My second line of enquiry was about how well leaders are ensuring that pupils make rapid progress in all areas of the curriculum. Although pupils achieve well at both key stages 1 and 2, they do not make equally rapid progress in all areas of the curriculum. Leaders and staff have created a caring and energetic school in which pupils love to work hard and achieve well. One pupil commented: 'We are at the best school in the universe because we work really hard and the teachers work really hard. Teachers are kind and really help me when I get stuck.' Parents value the 'well rounded approach' taken by leaders, and as one parent said, 'He has come on leaps and bounds with not only his academic work but through his confidence and resilience.'
- Inspection evidence demonstrated that pupils receive sufficiently effective guidance to help them to make good progress. Teachers consistently use the school's marking process. The school has significantly improved its approach to teachers' feedback in books; this approach is used consistently across the school and pupils are enthusiastic about improving their work as a result of pertinent teacher guidance. As a result, in most areas of the curriculum, pupils are clear about how to improve and take their next steps.
- My final key line of enquiry was about how leaders ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is equally effective in all classes. I found that teachers respond rapidly to assessment information. They generally adapt their teaching effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. Evidence in books shows that they are quick to put strategies in place to support pupils to move forward.
- Staff encourage pupils towards greater degrees of independence. Pupils use the resources in each classroom to help them work in this way. Teaching staff regularly refresh these helpful and attractive resources so that pupils are encouraged to develop their own skills, knowledge and understanding and ask probing questions.
- Leaders and teachers routinely offer challenge to all children. Pupils have a range of opportunities to choose more challenging topics. Staff regularly review pupils' progress to ensure that they make good progress from their varying starting points. However, pupils do not currently make consistently rapid progress in all areas of the curriculum. Staff do not consistently ensure that activities and tasks provide sufficient additional challenge to promote more rapid progress in every area of the curriculum. Leaders and staff have identified this as an area for improvement in the school's development plan. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of the strategies adopted to accelerate pupils' progress.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to extend pupils' achievements in every area of the curriculum by ensuring that activities, and the challenge to excel, are precisely matched to pupils' needs.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Cornish  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this one-day inspection, I met with you and the head of school, a group of leaders, and a group of governors. I had a telephone conversation with the school's improvement partner.

I met with groups of pupils from all year groups and also spoke informally with them around the school. I met with the leaders responsible for safeguarding, a group of teachers and other leaders about assessment and progress. I conducted joint visits to lessons with you and the head of school and spoke with pupils about what they were learning and their progress. I looked in detail at pupils' books, both with leaders present and on my own.

I took into account 158 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 77 free-text messages from parents. I also considered the results provided by 22 members of the staff to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, plans, safeguarding records, assessment information and other documents available on the school website.