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Mrs Lulu Esua  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Esua

### **Short inspection of St John's CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 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 June 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 joined the school shortly after the previous inspection and have ensured that the school continues to improve. This is a high-achieving school where pupils develop positive attitudes to their learning.

Pupils continue to achieve highly in their reading and mathematics, particularly at the end of key stage 2. However, in 2016 and 2017 pupils' progress in writing at the end of key stage 2 was below national averages. You said that this was due to the increased demands of the new national curriculum. You and your team have prioritised the improvement of writing through a number of new initiatives, with a greater focus on developing middle leaders. This was an area for improvement during the previous inspection and you recognise that there is still more work to be done.

Governors have a better understanding of the school's priorities since the previous inspection, particularly around their understanding of information about pupils' achievement. For example, they look at the quality of writing books alongside leaders and listen to disadvantaged pupils read. Governors keep up to date with their safeguarding training and have a strong understanding of the school's procedures to keep pupils safe.

Staff are proud to work at the school. All parents and carers that responded to the online survey reported that they would recommend the school to another parent. Parents value the improvements in communication between them and the school.

Parents say that their children are well cared for and that the 'community feel' of the school is a positive feature.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You work effectively with the deputy headteacher to ensure that the school's safeguarding procedures are implemented successfully. Staff have a secure understanding of the school's policies, including how to use external agencies should they need to. Leaders ensure that induction arrangements for new staff are robust.

Leaders are proactive in helping pupils to keep safe from potential risks. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn about the dangers of gang violence and knife crime through 'gang against violence' workshops. They also learn about how to keep themselves safe from potential grooming incidents. Pupils from the 'online safety task force' spoke to me enthusiastically about their responsibilities to share information with staff and pupils about keeping safe online. As a result of these activities, pupils feel very safe both in and away from school.

### **Inspection findings**

- We first agreed to look at the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve pupils' progress in writing. This was because pupils' progress in writing at the end of key stage 2 was below the national averages in 2016 and 2017.
- Leaders have attempted to improve pupils' writing through using a thematic approach where pupils write using knowledge acquired from topic activities. This is beginning to make a difference. For example, key stage 2 pupils wrote a story at length using rich vocabulary linked to their learning of the Bronze and Iron Age. However, teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' writing in subjects other than English are inconsistent. Pupils have limited opportunities to write at length and apply their skills in these subjects; and when pupils do, the quality of writing is not as high as it could be. This limits the progress pupils make in their writing.
- Typically, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their writing activities. Teachers gather pupils' ideas and use real-life experiences to help them write. For example, pupils in Year 2 wrote with fluency and understanding about their visit to the local church. Adults ensured that pupils settled quickly and checked their understanding. As a result, the quality of pupils' writing was high. However, sometimes pupils take too long to begin to write and teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' handwriting and their use of punctuation. When this occurs, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders have prioritised the accuracy of pupils' writing assessment information in line with new curriculum requirements. As a result, staff use objectives from the national curriculum better than they previously did. However, leaders' monitoring of pupils' writing and assessment information is not as precise as it could be.
- We next looked at the effectiveness of leaders' actions in developing pupils'

reading. I chose to look at this area because pupils' progress and attainment continues to be well above the national averages, particularly at the end of key stage 2. Leaders identified this as an area of strength across the school.

- The teaching of phonics is consistent and pupils make good progress. Adults use strong subject knowledge and systematically help pupils to learn new letters and sounds. For example, in Year 1, pupils were highly engaged in practising previously learned sounds and the teacher skilfully introduced new phonics rules. Teaching assistants in Reception and Year 1 successfully use targeted intervention groups to help pupils working below age-related expectations in their phonics. These pupils are supported very well because adults have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and challenge them with increasingly difficult tasks. They check pupils' understanding carefully and develop strong working relationships. As a result, the minority of pupils who did not meet the phonics screening check standards at the end of Year 1 successfully achieved this in Year 2.
- Key stage 2 pupils do not receive the level of challenge they should to develop their reading comprehension. Teachers set tasks for pupils that are too easy and do not build on pupils' inference skills. You recognise that the current reading approach at key stage 2 is not as effective as you would like, and that texts chosen for pupils do not challenge them sufficiently.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in writing continues to improve so that pupils make sustained progress from their starting points, by:
  - ensuring that teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are consistently high in all subjects
  - ensuring that leaders, including middle leaders, monitor and evaluate the quality of pupils' writing and assessment information precisely.
- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in reading, particularly in key stage 2, improves by using challenging texts and tasks that build on pupils' inference skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Noeman Anwar  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**  
**Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I visited classrooms and scrutinised pupils' books, accompanied by senior leaders. I carried out a review of the school's documentation, including the school's improvement plans, assessment and safeguarding information. I held meetings with senior and middle leaders, governors and a local authority adviser. Finally, I considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys including 58 responses from parents, 22 responses from staff members and 128 responses from pupils.