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Mr Richard Yelland  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Yelland

### **Short inspection of St John the Baptist CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 May 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 September 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Under your leadership, the school continues to offer a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment. Pupils are encouraged to develop as individuals and all are valued. You provide strong and consistent direction for the school and are well supported by your staff. You and the deputy headteacher have an impressive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school development plan accurately identifies the next steps for the school and how these will be achieved. Your evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate.

The school offers pupils unique learning experiences through its 'grow it', 'cook it', 'film it' and 'ask it' curriculum. The curriculum helps promote the school's values, including 'together we learn', which lie at the heart of the work the school does. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and greatly value the work of staff. One parent summed up the views of many when she said: 'All of my children have attended this fabulous village school. It isn't just that they receive an excellent education: it is a community, and is raising well-rounded children.'

Staff take pride in working at the school and are committed to the learning of all pupils. Lessons are planned effectively to allow pupils to make progress. Leaders have been careful in managing changes to staffing this year, and pupils' learning has not been disrupted as a result.

You are well supported by the governing body. Governors demonstrate a range of

skills and have a good understanding of the strengths of the school, together with the areas that need further development. Recent additions to the governing body, and an increased understanding of how to measure the impact of school development priorities, have resulted in governors being able to provide more effective challenge and support.

Pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school. Pupils eagerly join in discussions in class and are keen to share their ideas and listen to the views of others. They are confident to ask questions if they do not understand, and seek to support and guide each other. You and your leaders recognise that, at times, pupils do not take as much care in their work as they could, and are working to deal with this.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to continue improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. You have responded well to this recommendation, and the standard of teaching in the school remains good. Leaders were also asked to monitor the achievement of different groups of pupils, and for governors to check the progress of these groups. Leaders and governors now routinely check the progress of different groups of pupils through the systems that have been introduced to assess pupils' understanding. Governors are provided with useful information that allows them to monitor carefully the achievement of all pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is effective. Well-established systems and processes mean that record-keeping is good. Concerns raised are quickly and effectively managed, either by the school or with the support of other professional agencies. Staff are knowledgeable and benefit from relevant training that meets statutory requirements. There are effective systems in place to ensure that the right checks are carried out on people before they start work in the school.

Pupils speak confidently about how to keep themselves safe. This includes when they are online, and they can explain in detail what they have learned at school to help them do this. The curriculum includes meaningful opportunities for pupils to evaluate risk and make well-informed decisions about how to stay safe. Parents rightly trust the school to take good care of their children, and appreciate the work of leaders to support them and their families.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at: the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; the progress pupils in key stage 2 make in mathematics; the progress pupils make in writing, particularly boys, disadvantaged pupils and the most able; and the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting the needs and interests of all pupils.
- Leaders have taken effective action to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to deepen their learning through reasoning activities during their mathematics

lessons. Pupils' progress is monitored through the careful analysis of their work, and assessment information. As a result, pupils who fall behind receive carefully targeted support where they need it, and this allows them to catch up with their peers. The small number of disadvantaged pupils benefit particularly from this additional support. Girls' attitudes to mathematics are positive, and pupils explained that the tasks they complete are not too easy or too hard. However, pupils in key stage 2 are not routinely expected to record their work clearly, which hampers them in developing a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts and processes. Some of the most able pupils do not achieve as highly as they could.

- Pupils in the early years get off to a strong start with their writing. They use their phonics skills to help them spell simple words accurately. They make good progress with their handwriting and they eagerly settle to writing activities. Disadvantaged pupils throughout the school receive support from teachers and teaching assistants to allow them to catch up if they fall behind. This support is effective because it is planned carefully. Boys make good progress in their writing. They demonstrate increasingly complex use of vocabulary as they move through the school, and use this to make their writing interesting to read. The school curriculum provides pupils with meaningful opportunities to write, and where this is the case standards of presentation and handwriting are good. However, there are times when pupils take less pride in their work, and their presentation is poorer as a result. Some of the most able pupils do not make sufficiently rapid progress to enable them to achieve the higher standards.
- Pupils are provided with a wide range of interesting learning opportunities that are based on practical experiences. During the inspection, I observed pupils learning how to look after the school bees, make pizza linked to their work on Romans, and take part in a philosophy lesson. Pupils benefit from activities such as these every day at St John the Baptist School. The school site and grounds are used effectively to maximise the learning opportunities on offer. These include opportunities in the nature trail, swimming pool, cookery room and school garden. Pupils are enthused by the curriculum. Parents recognise it as a unique feature of the school and greatly value the experiences their children benefit from. The curriculum is carefully planned, linking subjects so that the content of the national curriculum is covered while the school keeps to its vision of 'learning through doing'. Purposeful opportunities for writing are provided by the experiences on offer. However, you and your school leaders recognise the need to ensure that, by the end of key stage 2, pupils' outcomes in writing are at least in line with national averages.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the progress of the most able pupils is accelerated so that a greater proportion attains at a greater depth in writing and mathematics
- pupils' handwriting and presentation are improved.

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

Yours sincerely

James Freeston  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, senior leaders, and governors, and spoke with a representative from the local authority. I visited lessons in the early years and key stages 1 and 2 to observe learning and talk to pupils about their learning. I spoke with pupils to talk about their experience of school, and scrutinised pupils' work in their books. I analysed 56 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. I examined a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, documentation relating to safeguarding and the school's assessment information.