

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr Mark Smith  
St John the Evangelist CofE VA Primary School  
Bluebell Way  
Shilton Park  
Carterton  
Oxfordshire  
OX18 1JF

Dear Mr Smith

### **Short inspection of St John the Evangelist CofE VA Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 June 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 July 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You provide inspirational leadership for your school. You are relentless in your pursuit of excellence and you strive to give the children in your care every opportunity to succeed. As a result, current pupils are making at least good progress in all subjects.

You provide a clear focus on achieving the highest quality of teaching and learning. Parents and carers recognise the positive impact of your leadership. One parent said, 'The headteacher is an incredible leader, which flows through to every aspect of the teaching and pastoral care.'

Pupils are happy to come to school and describe it as 'awesome', 'fun' and 'amazing'. They are clearly proud of their school and enjoy the range of experiences that staff provide. Staff, and parents and carers, are extremely enthusiastic about all aspects of the school's work. One parent said, 'This is a very special school and I can't say enough positive things about it.'

As a national leader of education, you have provided support to other schools,

which has helped you to develop and retain your staff. You have encouraged staff to visit other settings. This has enabled your teachers to reflect on and improve their own teaching which, in turn, has helped your pupils learn well.

Support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeates all that the school does. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain because all staff promote and demonstrate British values across the school. Respect and tolerance are fostered very effectively through the school's values and the subjects taught. One parent said, 'The school's strong values, which all staff, children and parents have developed ... create a positive culture and engage children and families in the school community.'

At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors recommended that you increase the skills of middle leaders to help them focus on school improvement. In response, you and your governors created a clear strategic plan built on coaching, high-quality training and professional dialogue. Middle leaders are reflective and are energetically seeking ways to improve and help the pupils to learn well. Staff morale is high because you have created a culture in which teachers are challenged, supported and enthused.

You have rightly identified that a small number of girls in a few classes are less confident about mathematics and do less well in mathematics than in other subjects. You have taken decisive action to deal with this and have clear plans in place to secure further improvements.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your governors have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and well maintained. Your checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are thorough. All school staff receive timely and high-quality training to ensure that they are confident in applying the school's policies and guidance in relation to child protection matters. Governors check the single central record frequently.

Safeguarding is at the heart of this nurturing Christian community. All parents who completed the online questionnaire feel that their children feel safe. Pupils said that they feel safe in school and value highly the support and guidance that all staff provide. One child told me, 'All the teachers are very supportive. If you are ever worried, you can go to them and they will help you.' You know your pupils well and they are very proud to be part of the 'St John's community'.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, I met with you to discuss the school's progress since the previous inspection. We agreed the following lines of enquiry: how well the school keeps pupils safe; the quality of teaching for disadvantaged pupils in reading and mathematics in key stage 1; the progress of girls in mathematics; the starting points for pupils when they enter the school and the progress they

make in the early years.

- School data showed that in previous years disadvantaged pupils at key stage 1 had not attained well in reading and mathematics compared to pupils nationally. You reorganised reading and mathematics to improve the achievement of this group and established a clear strategy to ensure that all interventions improved learning. For example, training for staff was carefully targeted and increased pupils' independence and self-esteem. In addition to this, you employed a teacher to work specifically with disadvantaged pupils. Your wise use of additional funds for these pupils accelerated pupils' rates of progress very well. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils' achievement matched that of other pupils nationally. You have continued to build on this work, and your careful monitoring of current disadvantaged pupils shows that they are making convincingly good progress.
- In 2017, pupils made strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2. The proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving the expected level of attainment in mathematics in 2017 represented exceptional progress from their starting points.
- In mathematics, while the girls' progress was good, it was not as strong as the boys'. Leaders made changes to the way in which mathematics is taught, and these have helped to develop girls' reasoning and problem-solving skills. However, there are still a small number of girls who are not as confident as their peers.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have secured significant improvement in the quality of teaching in the early years. For the past three years, the percentage of pupils reaching a good level of development has been above the national average. Staff carry out effective assessments to get a full and detailed profile of children's skills and abilities when they start school. Children's development is tracked meticulously so that staff can maximise ways for them to develop further and make strong progress. School data shows that current pupils in Reception entered the school with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age.
- You have given thoughtful consideration to planning the curriculum. As a result, pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects. Right from the start, pupils are given the chance to explore the world around them. These experiences help to improve their reading, writing and mathematical skills. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer, including nature rambling, cricket and tennis. These contribute to pupils' broad and enjoyable education.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- girls' progress in mathematics accelerates further.

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

Yours sincerely

David Harris  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, your deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and several members of staff. We talked about the improvements which have been made since the previous inspection. Together, we observed learning in several lessons. I examined pupils' work, focusing on mathematics. I held a meeting with three governors, including the chair. Before the inspection, I examined a variety of documents, including the school's website, published performance information and a summary of your school's self-evaluation document. I took account of 42 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 23 written comments and 37 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I considered a range of documentary evidence, including documents relating to safeguarding and governance.