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5 September 2018

Mrs Pattenden  
Headteacher  
St Margaret's Church of England Junior School  
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Dear Mrs Pattenden

### **Short inspection of St Margaret's Church of England Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 11 July 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 in March 2013.

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

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

You lead the school with unassuming determination and dedication to ensure that all pupils achieve well. Your quiet yet highly productive leadership has galvanised your strong team. Everyone shares your vision to build on the school's strengths. You are highly adept at nurturing talent and ensuring that staff members are deployed effectively to lead further school improvement. For example, middle leaders, including subject coordinators, your 'pupil premium' leader and your 'pastoral and welfare' lead are all particularly effective in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. So, too, are your teachers and support staff. It is to your credit, in creating such a devoted team, that every staff member who completed the Ofsted staff survey stated they are proud to work at St Margaret's Church of England Junior School.

Pupils are happy and confident learners. They settle to work quickly, listen carefully to their teachers and engage in lessons well. They take pride in their work, which is typically presented carefully and tidily in their exercise books. They respond appropriately to teachers' high expectations and participate fully in the life of the school. However, pupils are not yet demonstrating good knowledge and understanding to make healthy food choices. For example, at breaktime too many pupils chose to eat chocolate, crisps and confectionary. Those that I asked were unable to explain to me the negative impact that such snacks can have on their

general health and well-being.

Current pupils are achieving well. Historically, some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have not achieved as strongly as they should in a range of subjects. Since your appointment, you have been dogged in understanding why this was the case. Your accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness identified several shortcomings, particularly in the design of the curriculum and the strategy to support disadvantaged pupils. Your hard work, and that of other leaders and staff, to address these are ensuring that pupils' achievements are rising rapidly across the curriculum. You are aware, however, that there is still a difference in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally. This difference is diminishing, but not enough has been done to ensure that this group achieves more highly. You know, also, that a small number of disadvantaged pupils miss valuable learning time because they are sometimes late for school. Rightly, you are beginning to prioritise improvement plans to help these pupils get to school on time.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have created a vigilant environment at St Margaret's that helps protect children from harm. Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding, including important aspects such as the 'Prevent' duty and female genital mutilation. Safeguarding leaders, including those from the local governing body and trust are diligent in overseeing the school's safeguarding procedures. Leaders' robust approach to child protection ensures that all staff know what actions to take to keep children safe.

Safeguarding leaders work well with other child protection officers from the local authority. For example, strong links with children's services and social care workers provide wraparound care for vulnerable pupils. Importantly, school leaders do not shy away from challenging external agencies when the care they provide is not good enough. As the school's pastoral and welfare lead stated regarding safeguarding, 'I always get what I want for our children.'

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. For instance, when gaming online they know to protect their identities and personal information. They know that if they see something on the internet that worries or upsets them they must tell a trusted adult immediately. Of those pupils I spoke to, all stated that they have someone to turn to at school if they need help or have a concern.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, we focused on leaders' work to ensure that pupils achieve well in English and mathematics. We also scrutinised how effectively leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Finally, we evaluated the school's curriculum, and how well pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain.
- You ensure that pupils amass an increasingly wide and relevant vocabulary. For example, teaching ensures that, with each topic pupils study, they learn an array of new and challenging words. One pupil demonstrated an ability to apply ably

this growing knowledge when using the word 'palisade' when writing about a castle.

- There has been a determined and successful drive to improve pupils' reading skills. Pupils who need additional help are supported well with extra opportunities to read aloud to adults. Teaching assistants provide useful support and are skilled in strengthening pupils' phonic knowledge.
- You make sure that mathematics lessons are brisk and challenging. Teachers are skilled in providing demanding tasks that build on pupils' prior learning. For instance, when learning how to convert imperial measures to metric, most-able pupils were moved on to more challenging exercises swiftly. Consequently, pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.
- You use the pupil premium grant well to provide a range of support for disadvantaged pupils and their families. The wraparound care provided by leaders and the additional health and welfare workers employed at St Margaret's ensure that disadvantaged pupils' needs are met and that these pupils are consequently well-placed to learn effectively. However, a few of these pupils are still too often late to school.
- Staff ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive the extra help they need to achieve well academically. For instance, your pupil premium leader and pupil premium tutor work effectively alongside class teachers to provide additional learning opportunities in English and mathematics. This is proving very successful in ensuring that current disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress from their starting points. However, though diminishing, there is still a gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- You enable pupils to learn effectively across a broad and balanced curriculum. For example, vibrant and lively music lessons inspire pupils to sing tunefully and exuberantly. Well-chosen songs with suitably demanding harmonies enthral and enthuse pupils to perform together. Similarly, effective learning develops pupils' artistic skills. One Year 4 pupil was rightly proud to share his learning in history, and the suitably grotesque (but wonderful!) gargoyle he had modelled from clay.
- You ensure that pupils learn effectively about British values, such as respect and tolerance for others. For instance, the strong ties you have with a school in Malawi help pupils learn about different cultures and countries. The growing contribution this makes to pupils' positive attitudes prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- disadvantaged pupils' achievements continue to rise rapidly so that they match those of other pupils nationally
- the few disadvantaged pupils who struggle to arrive promptly for school are supported more effectively to miss less of their learning

- pupils have a greater understanding of healthy eating and show this through the snacks they choose to eat at breaktimes.

I am copying this letter to the co-chairs of the local governing board and the chief executive officer of the multi academy trust, the director of education for the diocese of Rochester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Medway. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dom Cook  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Together with you, I observed learning across Years 3, 4 and 5. We did not observe learning in Year 6 as these pupils were on their residential trip to the Isle of Wight. I spoke with pupils and examined the work in their exercise books. Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject coordinators and the school's pastoral and welfare lead. I met with the chief executive officer of the trust, and with the two co-chairs of the local governing board. I took into account the views of parents and carers who I met with at morning drop-off, and the 23 who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including their written comments. I also analysed 22 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 35 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. A range of documents was reviewed, including the school's development plan, leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, the school's single central record of employment checks on staff, information about pupils' achievement, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance and minutes of meetings held by governors.