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Mr Howard Fisher
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Fisher

Short inspection of St Georges C of E (Aided) Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 October 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 April 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 have worked with staff, governors and pupils to create a welcoming school where pupils enjoy learning and feel well supported. It is clear that pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school. Attendance has improved and now matches the national average. Staff are committed to the school's values of 'care, share, respect, trust and love'. All staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire said that they are proud to work at the school. One parent, speaking for many, said, 'The pupils' welfare, safety and quality of education is paramount to the school.'

Your evaluation of the school's performance is accurate. Development planning focuses on the current priorities for improvement, which are shared with and understood by all staff and governors. Staff are appreciative of their development opportunities, and they acknowledge that you evaluate their work load regularly to ensure that they enjoy a work/life balance. They understand their individual and collective responsibilities to secure further improvements in the school.

Since the last inspection of your predecessor school, you have worked hard to improve all aspects of provision. You and your senior leadership team are keen to ensure that pupils value their school experience. Pupils benefit from interesting and well-planned learning opportunities across a range of subjects. The curriculum has been redesigned and enriched by a wide range of visits, visitors and after-school activities. Pupils spoke with great appreciation of the after-school clubs and the forest school opportunities. You have placed language development at the heart of

the curriculum and have created links between subjects through the study of high-quality children's texts. The school is proud to have achieved national quality standards for the academic achievements of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities as well as for their achievements in the arts.

Governors work well with senior leaders and provide support and challenge on aspects of improvement. Alongside the leaders, governors are working hard to ensure that parents fully appreciate the school's work and the benefits for their children. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They visit regularly, have specific responsibilities and, as a result, they know the school well. Governors keep their knowledge and skills up to date through regular training. They use their wide range of skills to keep a watch on pupils' progress and well-being.

Areas for improvement identified in the last inspection of the predecessor school have been mostly tackled effectively. The proportions of pupils attaining the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics were well above the national averages at the end of key stage 2 in 2018, and they show a three-year upward trend. Pupils' achievement continues to improve because you have improved the quality of the curriculum and are committed to high-quality teaching. However, there is still some teaching that is not consistently good, which means pupils do not make the progress that they could. For example, while improving, the most able pupils do not consistently make strong progress in mathematics during key stage 1. Early years provision gives children a good start to their education. Children learn in well-resourced classrooms and outdoor areas. They are interested in their learning because they are provided with imaginative and stimulating activities that are well matched to their needs. By the end of Reception, an above-average proportion of children achieve a good level of development.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils feel safe and are safe in your school. Pupils told me that teachers look after them well and that there is always an adult that they can go to for help on the playground. Pupils said that bullying is rare, but if it does happen, they have confidence that staff will help them resolve any issues. Parents said that their children are well looked after while they are at school. You have a thorough approach to safeguarding, and you train staff effectively. When you need to act to support pupils, you do so quickly and persevere with external agencies so that pupils get the support required.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding because you give pupils' safety high priority. All staff use every opportunity to teach pupils about the importance of staying safe. The 'keeping safe' elements of the curriculum are comprehensive and include: e-safety training; cycling and water proficiency; and health champions. Parents recognise the efforts you make to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for all pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

You have reduced exclusions so that they are now in line with the national average.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on four key lines of enquiry, including safeguarding. The first line of enquiry looked at how well the most able pupils make progress in reading and writing in key stages 1 and 2. Most staff now plan interesting lessons which match pupils' abilities. In key stage 1, the proportions of pupils who have achieved greater depth in both reading and writing have increased over the last two years. At the end of key stage 2 in 2018, the most able pupils made very good progress in reading and writing. Higher proportions achieved the expected and higher standards than the national averages.
- During the inspection, I also looked at how well most-able pupils progress in mathematics at key stage 1. You have provided high-quality training for staff, who are now better able to develop pupils' competence in calculation skills. Staff are also more skilled in developing pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts and supporting them to do so by using practical resources. The work in pupils' books shows that this is having a positive impact on their mastery of number and place value. In 2018, the outcomes of the most able pupils in key stage 1 showed that they are beginning to make stronger progress. However, the most able pupils would benefit from teachers consistently presenting them with tasks that require them to think more deeply in order to solve problems.
- The second key line of enquiry looked at how well pupils achieve in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. You have changed your approach to the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling, and you have added significantly more structure to the scheme of work. You appointed a middle leader to deliver training for staff that focused on improving their knowledge and skills. You also changed teachers' assessment practice. These actions have had a positive impact and achievement has improved significantly over the last three years.
- You have successfully introduced a new handwriting approach. Parents told me that they welcome this initiative. You have trained staff and you have initiated a whole-school standard presentation format. You celebrate pupils' achievement in handwriting during assemblies. In most classes, the quality of presentation has improved over the last year. You are aware of some inconsistencies but are determined to achieve a good standard of presentation across the school.
- The third line of enquiry looked at the quality of the curriculum and its impact, particularly on most-able pupils. You have strengthened the curriculum so that it is more stimulating for all pupils. You have taught pupils strategies to map their ideas, and there is evidence in history and geography that this is supporting the most pupils to think more deeply about their work. You have developed a new enquiry-based approach to encourage problem-solving both within and across subjects. The impact of this initiative is clear, as pupils' outcomes have improved over the last three years, particularly for the most able pupils in reading at the end of key stage 2.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- progress and attainment improve for the most able pupils in mathematics across key stage 1.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Canterbury, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Medway. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sir Robin Boshier
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and your senior leadership team to discuss the school's self-evaluation information, with a focus on pupils' progress and the improvements since the last inspection of the predecessor school. We did several 'learning walks' through early years and key stages 1 and 2. We observed teaching and learning and looked at a range of pupils' work in books. I also scrutinised a number of pupils' science and topic books. I observed behaviour during lessons and at lunchtime. I met with pupils to find out about their experience of school and how safe they feel.

I had meetings with senior leaders, governors and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust. I looked at a range of written evidence, including: the school's self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; the single central record and other documents related to safeguarding; and the school's curriculum. I took account of the views of 25 parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text comments, and considered the views of parents who I talked to before the start of the school day. I also took account of the views of 26 members of staff who completed Ofsted's online staff survey.