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21 November 2018

Mrs Liz Bird  
Sibertswold Church of England Primary School at Shepherdswell  
Coldred Road  
Shepherdswell  
Dover  
Kent  
CT15 7LF

Dear Mrs Bird

### **Short inspection of Sibertswold Church of England Primary School at Shepherdswell**

Following my visit to the school on 18 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 the school was judged to be good in December 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that 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.

Your ambition for your pupils is shared by all at the school. Leaders have worked hard to ensure that pupils make rapid academic and pastoral progress throughout their time at Sibertswold. This work is successful, so that standards are high across the school. You have established high expectations. A culture of continual improvement inspires staff to evaluate and refine their work carefully, with a view to always improving outcomes for pupils.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. In particular, you have ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently strong across the school. Pupils attain very highly throughout the school. They are well prepared for their next steps. The provisional 2018 key stage 2 national assessment outcomes indicate that a far greater proportion of pupils attained the expected standard or higher in reading, writing and mathematics than did so nationally. Your analysis of the school's current strengths and areas for development of the school is accurate. Leaders are rightly monitoring the impact of curriculum changes so that they can ensure that all groups of pupils

are supported to sustain their high standards and make strong progress as they move through the school.

Pupils clearly love their school. They enjoy the interesting and stimulating learning and extra-curricular experiences that are provided. They display excellent attitudes to their work and enthusiastically rise to learning challenges that teachers set. They appreciate the hard work of all the staff. One pupil commented: 'It doesn't matter which teacher you have, because all of them are really good with us and take care of us.'

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, share pupils' very positive views about the school, many writing that their children 'love going to school'. Many comments highlight the strong balance of academic and pastoral care that you provide. One parent wrote: 'The children here are genuinely cared for, nurtured and supported to grow and become the best they can be.' Another commented that, for their children, 'teachers have ignited a love for learning'.

Governors provide you with effective support and challenge. They know the school well, share your inclusive vision and are proud of the school's reputation within the local community. Governors support the school's development through their contributions at full governing body meetings, their various committees and their visits to meet school leaders. They ask challenging questions, especially about the achievement of pupils. This is helping to hold you to account for pupils' progress. However, governors have not ensured that the school's website is routinely updated to show the latest information, including regarding the curriculum.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Pupils say that they feel safe at school and the parents who responded to Parent View agreed with this. The positive relationships between staff and pupils are evident throughout the school. Pupils are more likely to raise any concerns that they might have because they have faith that staff will listen to them, and take any action to help them, if needed. This helps to keep pupils safe.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have a very good understanding of your role as the school's designated safeguarding lead. Child protection records are kept well and show that you take prompt action when necessary. You have ensured that staff are vigilant to any signs of neglect or abuse, and that they report these promptly to you or your deputy. Leaders check regularly on the health and well-being of pupils that you know to be vulnerable. This helps you to be certain that all pupils are safe and well and to take further action when you need to.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed I would consider how effectively leaders ensure that staff have high expectations of all pupils, in particular those in key

stage 2 whose attainment at the end of key stage 1 was average when compared with the national picture. I found that staff throughout the school have high expectations for what pupils can achieve, regardless of pupils' prior attainment or any barriers to success they might experience. Teachers demonstrate expert subject knowledge, combining this very well with their strong relationships with pupils to support pupils' rapid progress. Teachers check routinely on pupils' understanding. This supports effective teaching which improves pupils' work and secures pupils' growing knowledge as they progress through the school.

- I also looked at how well leaders have addressed differences in progress between girls and boys in reading and mathematics. I found that these differences are historical and that gender differences in progress have reduced. Leaders acted promptly to address this issue when it was identified, including adapting the curriculum and strengthening teaching throughout the school. Girls and boys make strong progress across the school. You are rightly focusing now on ensuring excellent progress for all pupils in key stage 2, who attained highly at the end of key stage 1.
- Since the previous inspection, you have ensured that subject leadership is strong and contributes well to school improvement. You have successfully used professional development activities to encourage, challenge and support teachers' and middle leaders' improvement. Middle leaders are passionate about their subjects and have contributed well to the new curriculum approach. They focus well on ensuring that pupils develop secure knowledge and the confidence to apply this across the curriculum. Pupils show a strong depth of knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects. Leaders and governors are evaluating and refining the changes made to the curriculum, to ensure that they support pupils' sustained progress.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- publish the full range of statutory information to parents and ensure that this is always up to date
- continue to evaluate and refine curriculum changes to further develop pupils' progress over time.

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

Yours sincerely

Jo Lakey  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the head of school, the special educational needs and/or disabilities leader and other middle leaders. I met with the chair of governors and two other members of the governing body. I spoke with a representative of the local authority. I met with two groups of pupils and spoke with other pupils during the day. I took into account the following: 37 responses to Parent View; 22 free-text comments and 20 responses to your recent staff survey. I observed teaching and learning, jointly with you, in all classes. I looked at school documents, including the single central record, school improvement plan and information about pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.