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Valerie Elliott  
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Dear Mrs Elliott

### **Short inspection of St James CofE Aided Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 December 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 October 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since joining the school in 2016 you have successfully developed strong partnerships with all members of the school community. This has ensured that the shared vision you have developed together is meaningful and unifying. Together you have been successful in developing a welcoming, caring school with high and improving standards. You have developed leadership across the school effectively. This has helped to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have their needs met.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend well. They value their education and the supportive relationships they build with adults and their peers. Pupils explained how they are helped to make progress, telling me: 'Teachers spend time with everyone making sure the work is just right.' Pupils behave well. They were clear that bullying happens very rarely, but that if it does occur it is swiftly resolved if they tell an adult. Pupils enjoy engaging with the interesting tasks their teachers set them. They work well together, enthusiastically sharing ideas and methods. They value the ethos of the school, which celebrates effort and inclusion. For example, you made sure that everyone who wanted a speaking part in the school play had one.

During the inspection the focus on equality of opportunity was evident throughout the school. Pupils with SEND are supported in an individualised and thoughtful way, which ensures that they get what they need to make progress and grow in confidence. Parents value the 'family feel' of the school and the way in which their

children's well-being is of central importance. A parent writing on the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, encapsulated the views of many in saying: 'My child loves being at St James. He is well cared for and inspired to learn.'

Governance is highly effective. Governors know the school well. They use a wide range of information to support and challenge leaders. They visit regularly to ensure that all is as it should be, but rightly retain a strategic overview. You value highly the open and professional relationships that underpin this effective work and help you to drive the school forward.

You have maintained the strengths identified at the previous inspection. Children make good progress in the early years. The learning environment contains well-planned activities, both inside the classroom and outside, which fascinate children and invite exploration. Highly skilled teaching makes learning both fun and challenging.

You have addressed the areas for improvement in the previous report. The English and mathematics leaders are passionate about developing their subjects. They have benefited from effective support from the diocese, as well as from local authority training. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to extend their skills through practical experiences. Opportunities for real-life problem solving in mathematics are extensive. They range from regular cooking in the well-equipped children's kitchen to making and using number lines with sticks on the common.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Processes and systems for recruitment are clear and follow appropriate guidelines and documentation. Record-keeping is meticulous. Child protection is at the heart of the school. Staff are well trained and know what to look out for to ensure that pupils are kept safe. The staff receive up-to-date information and reminders through the weekly bulletin. Any concerns are reported, recorded and acted on in a timely and professional fashion. Work with other agencies is effective and demonstrates appropriate tenacity when it is needed.

Pupils feel safe at the school. They trust in the adults to act to keep them safe. They have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe, including when online, telling me about the need to 'think before you click'.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection we looked closely together at the teaching of mathematics across the school. Leaders' work to develop teaching through the use of questioning has been effective. For example, during a Year 5 session on exploring cubed numbers, pupils were able to respond to the teacher's questions with clear explanations, and their thinking was well developed. As a result, pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are confident mathematicians. They explain their working and can go back

to self-correct when they spot a calculation error. They have well-developed number skills which they enjoy applying to regular problem-solving activities. These activities are beginning to be developed into the wider curriculum, most notably for older pupils in science.

- We also looked together at pupils' progress in writing. Teaching provides pupils with a range of opportunities to write across different genres. High expectations of grammar, punctuation and spelling are supported by well-focused feedback, in line with the school's policy. Pupils' work demonstrates rich well-chosen vocabulary, the development of which is supported effectively by the regular use of well-matched and engaging texts. Nevertheless, sometimes teaching is not adapted well enough to meet the needs of the most able pupils. When this happens progress for this group slows.
- We looked together at the provision for pupils with SEND. Leadership for pupils with SEND is effective. Learning for this group of pupils is carefully planned and incorporates the views of parents, teachers and other professionals from within the school and beyond. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that these pupils receive the right support so that they can make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils with SEND are well supported and make good progress in writing. Support timetables have been thoughtfully adapted to ensure that pupils benefit from high-quality classroom input. Adults and resources are used well, providing support where needed, but also fostering pupils' independence and growing confidence.
- We also looked at the provision for pupils across the wider curriculum. Subject leaders are enthusiastic and have high aspirations for their subjects. There are examples of engaging activities across the school. Some work has started to refine planning in subjects such as science. However, the planning and teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics is not yet methodically structured. Sequences of learning do not build on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as effectively as is seen in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress in these aspects of the curriculum.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching is consistently well matched to the needs of the most able pupils, particularly in writing.
- sequences of learning are further developed across the wider curriculum so that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are systematically built upon in subjects other than English and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Deborah Gordon  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met regularly with you and your deputy. I also met with members of the governing body and with staff. I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority to gather their views of the school. I reviewed documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan, and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. Together, we visited classes across the school. In lessons, I observed pupils learning, looked at their books, heard them read, and spoke to pupils about their work. I had a meeting with pupils to gather their views of the school. I took into account the views of parents I met in the playground. I also considered 95 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 54 free-text responses and two letters from parents.