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Samantha Crinnion
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Crinnion

Short inspection of Tenterden Church of England Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 11 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Tenterden Church of England Junior School federated with Tenterden Infant School in 2014. You became executive headteacher in January 2016 before the multi-academy trust was formed in December 2016. Despite leadership and staffing changes, you have built a strong and united team of teachers and senior and middle leaders. You have recently also been supporting another local school. To increase leadership capacity, the deputy headteacher of the infant school has become a very able head of school in the junior school on a temporary basis until this support comes to an end.

The school is an integral part of Tenterden community life. For example, the school has led a community art project involving all schools in the trust, the members of Tenterden Dementia Café and Tenterden Lions Club. Artwork was displayed in the church, the town hall and 14 shop windows in Tenterden High Street

This is a school where emotional well-being is of paramount importance. You have forged strong links with the trust's secondary school, Homewood Trust and Sixth Form Centre. Year 6 pupils benefit from the expertise of the secondary school's science and mathematics teachers, and sixth formers have trained Year 5 pupils to be mentors of younger children in the junior school. As a result, pupils thrive and develop as confident, articulate learners.

Parents and carers have a very positive view of the school. Several told me that they 'love everything about the school', particularly how happy their children are, how valued their children feel, and how welcome staff make parents feel. Pupils enjoy their lessons and speak highly of their teachers. You have created a harmonious, caring community, and this is reflected in pupils' good attendance and exemplary behaviour.

Governors new to their role are keen and committed to school improvement. They visit the school to see for themselves how successful the school's action planning is. The trust and the local governing body have a clear understanding of their different, but complementary, strategic roles. Governors do not fully appreciate how the school's tracking data shows how well different groups of pupils are progressing. This impedes their making an even more effective contribution to the monitoring of the school's effectiveness.

You have maintained and built on the strengths identified at the last inspection and are addressing the areas for improvement. In two out of the last three years, pupils at the end of key stage 2 have consistently attained above national averages in assessments in English, and have been in line with, or above, national averages in mathematics. You acknowledge, however, that outcomes at the end of Year 6 this year were not good enough. This was due in part to pupils joining the school part way through Years 5 and 6, and the cohort containing a high proportion of pupils with complex additional needs. You are determined that outcomes will return to their previous above-average levels, and have taken immediate action to address this.

We agreed at the start of this inspection that I would consider how well these actions were working, including how effectively new middle leaders were helping to raise standards in English and mathematics. We also agreed to look at the provision for disadvantaged and most-able pupils, and safeguarding.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose and regularly updated in line with current statutory guidance. The site is secure, and entry and exit procedures are tight. All necessary checks on the suitability of staff are recorded exceptionally well on the school's single central record. The school relentlessly pursues support through various agencies for vulnerable pupils and their families, and there are well-documented cases of outcomes improving as a result of this dedicated work.

The school's safeguarding policy is kept under regular review and adheres to the latest government guidance. Staff receive regular training and are aware of what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. Scrutiny of safeguarding records shows that this system is well embedded and that any concerns are followed up quickly and thoroughly.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. Bullying is

so rare that pupils were surprised to be asked about it! They trust, if they are ever worried about anything, that adults in school listen to them and help resolve any problems.

Inspection findings

- Following lower outcomes and rates of progress at the end of Year 6 last year, leaders have implemented a raft of measures to accelerate progress in writing and mathematics across the school. Current assessment information, supported by work scrutiny, indicates that standards have improved rapidly and that pupils of all abilities are making good progress. Many more are now on track to reach expected levels and greater depth in writing and mathematics than last year.
- The excellent inclusion leader and her skilled team meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Pupils with SEND, including emotional or behavioural problems, are quickly identified and specific programmes devised to support them. Pastoral support is excellent. Work in pupils' books, and the school's own information, indicates that strong progress from pupils' starting points is being sustained.
- Leaders of mathematics and writing have systematically introduced new initiatives with the expectation that more pupils will reach higher standards at the end of key stage 2. These include making sure that pupils are more fluent in their recall of number facts and that more concrete apparatus is available to help less-able pupils. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson on symmetry, where pupils were able to understand rotational and reflective symmetry because they used real shapes to work with. Work in mathematics books and evidence from visits to lessons with you confirm that expectations are mostly high of both the quality and quantity of work. We found, however, that too often most-able pupils have to work their way through questions which are too easy for them before going on to more challenging activities. This restricts the time they have to work consistently at the right level.
- Writing activities provide increased opportunities for connected learning, for example diary writing connected to the Second World War. The build-up of skills to an independently completed piece of work is carefully planned and supports pupils' ability to structure writing appropriately across a range of genres. Pupils are able to talk about how well they are progressing and what they have to do to improve their writing further.
- Subject leaders meet regularly with teachers to discuss pupils' progress and to hold teachers to account. Their monitoring role is developing, and they model good practice to support new staff effectively. However, the missing link is ensuring that recommendations they make are actioned.
- The progress that disadvantaged pupils make is improving. School records and work scrutiny confirm that the gap between their achievement and that of their peers is narrowing. There is increased opportunity to work on bespoke programmes to catch up and develop disadvantaged pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Many more are on track to reach at least age-expected outcomes across the school, and at the end of Year 6, than last year. The

inclusion leader and family liaison officer support vulnerable pupils and their families exceptionally well. They build supportive relationships with parents and pupils, and rigorously check that teachers understand a child's situation and needs so that support is consistent throughout, both academically and emotionally.

- The curriculum engages pupils. They particularly enjoy art, sport and taking responsibilities within school, such as being peer mentors, house captains or champions of healthy eating. Pupils' artwork, including ceramics and three-dimensional installations of flowers around the school, is detailed and striking.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers move pupils on in their learning in mathematics as soon as they are ready, particularly most-able pupils
- leaders of mathematics and English check more rigorously that teachers are implementing suggestions they make for improvements to teaching
- governors have a more insightful and acute awareness about the performance of different groups within the school and whether the school's actions are impacting on outcomes.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees, 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 Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lynda Welham
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your senior and middle leadership teams, members of the local governing body, leaders of English and mathematics, and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust. I reviewed documentation, including safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. I had a telephone call with the local authority representative responsible for monitoring the school. I also scrutinised the school improvement plan and information about the achievement of current pupils. Together, we visited all classes to observe the teaching of English and mathematics, look at books and speak to pupils about their work. I met with a group of pupils from across each year group to get their views of the school. I took account of parents' views in the playground before school and considered 28 responses to

Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 15 free-text comments. I received a telephone call from a parent to Ofsted during the inspection.