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Mr Richard Hoskins
Head of School
St Uny Church of England School
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Dear Mr Hoskins

Short inspection of St Uny Church of England School

Following my visit to the school on 7 June 2019, 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 June 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since the previous inspection, there have been many changes to the teaching staff and leadership of the school which have been poorly managed. This has had a de-stabilising effect and led to a decline in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. For example, in 2018, pupils' progress was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. However, current leaders, together with the support of the trust's strategic partner, are taking appropriate action to address identified priorities. Since September 2018, and particularly following your start in January 2019, there are discernible signs of improvement. Together with other leaders, including the strategic partner and hub councillors, you have quickly identified the right areas for improvement through effective monitoring and accurate self-evaluation. You use this information well to hold teachers to account. As a result, teachers' and pupils' expectations are rising and the quality of work seen in lessons and in pupils' workbooks is improving.

However, the quality of pupils' work and their experiences remain too variable in different subjects. The deficits in pupils' learning that have accrued over time are still taking time to resolve. For example, gaps in pupils' vocabulary still hold some back with their comprehension in reading or when writing. Furthermore, teachers do not ensure that the standard of work, particularly in writing, is consistent in a

range of subjects, such as in pupils' written accounts in science. You are, however, challenging teachers to improve. The introduction of an assessment framework with clear expectations means you are now tracking pupils' progress. The implementation of non-negotiables for responding to pupils' work and providing guidance to them is also supporting pupils to do better. Pupils are keen to participate in lessons. They work well together where teachers pose challenging questions and some lively activities in lessons.

Your efforts to improve the school are keenly reflected in the views of most pupils, parents and carers, and staff. For example, a typical view of parents gathered through Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, includes: 'The introduction of the new headteacher and teachers feels like a really positive step', and, 'This school is currently everything I could wish for my children'. Along with hub councillors, you have reinvigorated the school's vision and are placing the school's Christian distinctiveness at the heart of its implementation. This is ensuring that pupils' welfare and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are a priority. Under your leadership, the school community is bonding and once again growing together. However, you are aware that there is still much to do and improvements are too recent or remain fragile at this time.

Due to the school's conversion to become an academy in 2016, there are no previous inspection findings or areas for improvement to evaluate in this letter.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders implement the trust's safeguarding and child protection policies rigorously. As a result, staff are vetted and checked and receive appropriate induction and training to keep pupils safe. Staff are knowledgeable and keenly aware of their safeguarding duties and responsibilities. Any concerns are referred swiftly to the appropriate external agencies and handled with due diligence. You and other leaders work well with the range of external partners to keep pupils safe.

Pupils say that they feel safe. They enjoy school and feel well supported by adults. Pupils have confidence in staff to deal with problems that may arise, including any isolated or rare incidents of bullying. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in various situations. For example, they know how to protect personal data when working online, or how to report suspicious or unwanted behaviour to a safe adult. They also know when and how they should evacuate the school building in the event of an emergency.

Inspection findings

- We agreed some key lines of enquiry for the inspection. The first involved evaluating how well the school's curriculum is promoting the best possible outcomes for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. The start you have made in raising teachers' expectations is having a positive impact. However, critical gaps in pupils' knowledge are still evident and impede pupils' progress. This includes vocabulary in reading, and understanding number and related facts

such as decimals and fractions.

- Teachers' expectations of pupils are not consistently high enough in the range of subjects, including for the most able pupils. As a result, pupils do not present their best work or build rapidly on prior knowledge where too little is expected of them.
- Teachers do not consistently match work to meet the skills, knowledge and ability of pupils precisely enough. This is particularly relevant for the lowest-attaining pupils and some with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). When work is mismatched, it interrupts pupils' learning and the progress they make in reading, writing and/or mathematics.
- Pupils' writing is not consistently strong in a range of subjects. Furthermore, pupils' sentence construction, particularly for older or most-able pupils, is limited in terms of structure or complexity when writing towards the highest standards. However, pupils are now producing more interesting and varied writing linked to their topic work, such as diary entries for historical events. Pupils are enjoying this and are excited when work is connected or linked across the curriculum.
- You recognise the importance of a well-considered curriculum design. Therefore, you have started to implement and evaluate a new curriculum approach. This is continuing through into the next academic year and is a key priority for school improvement. As such, sequences for learning are becoming more joined up so that pupils can make useful links across the curriculum to provide a broad foundation for their learning.
- I also evaluated how well reading is promoted throughout the school. You have ensured that reading receives designated daily teaching time which includes phonics in Reception and key stage 1. Pupils also have direct daily guided reading time and opportunities to read for different purposes across the school day, including using the library. However, the school's approach to reading has not yet been evaluated well enough. As a result, there are inconsistencies in the teaching of reading, such as weaknesses in some teachers' subject knowledge, which reduces the quality of guided reading sessions. In addition, the reading box in the library provides a mix of books and schemes that are too varied to be helpful when pupils are choosing books on their own. However, some teachers suitably challenge and probe pupils' comprehension and deduction skills.
- Finally, I considered how well the disadvantaged pupils are identified and supported to reach the standards of which they are capable. Leaders have identified pupils eligible for the additional funding and taken steps to ensure that these pupils have targeted provision to boost their learning. You and other leaders have ensured that there is a current pupil premium strategy in place to help pupils overcome barriers to learning with a focus on improving the daily quality of class teaching for all.
- However, the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils remain weak in reading, writing and mathematics. There is still too much of a difference between the standards they reach in comparison with other pupils nationally. This is further compounded where pupils are the lowest-attaining or have SEND. Furthermore, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is still low. You and other leaders in the school recognise this. As such, you are taking further action to raise the profile of disadvantaged

pupils, including the '50 day experiences' to broaden pupils' life experiences. You are having an external review of the pupil premium to assist with developing this area of the school's work.

- Teachers' assessment and use of information to help disadvantaged pupils to overcome particular barriers with their reading are not precise or used well enough, particularly for those who need to catch up. Disadvantaged pupils do not consistently have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve this aspect of their learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils use and apply their English and mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum to raise their achievement
- the pupil premium strategy is fully evaluated to improve the attendance and achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able
- the teaching, learning and assessment of reading are improved so that pupils gain confidence and a wide knowledge of vocabulary for comprehension.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer, the director of education for the Diocese of Truro, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cornwall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We agreed the timetable and activities for the inspection at the start of the day. I worked with you to sample a range of pupils' work and talk with pupils. I scrutinised safeguarding records and a wide range of related documentation, including staff recruitment, training and vetting arrangements. I spoke to pupils and staff about their views of the school, including safeguarding. I evaluated evidence that shows how you work with other agencies to keep children safe. I met with representatives of the local hub council and reviewed school documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary, trust and hub improvement plans, and records of visits and audits. I took full account of the 51 responses on Parent View, as well as the free-text comments and other information received by Ofsted. I also spoke with two trustees, including the deputy chief executive officer and the strategic partner. I also met with a group of leaders and teachers separately to evaluate current

leaders' work in addressing issues raised through the key lines of enquiry.