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Mrs Susan Davies-Beckett  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Davies-Beckett

### **Short inspection of Christ Church C of E Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 18 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 July 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 and other leaders have a clear and strongly articulated vision for the school. This is built on the Christian ethos of the school and the firm conviction that, once they leave the school, pupils will 'do good in the world'. This is exemplified by the new twinning project with a primary school in Kolkata, India. As well as raising money to support your partner school, you have developed joint curriculum projects, such as 'speak as well as you can' to support speaking skills.

You are proud of the staff team and you have high expectations of them. You lead a rigorous programme of regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning. This is backed up by an effective programme of coaching and training to bring about improvements in teaching where weaknesses are identified. Self-evaluation documents and development plans are detailed and robust. You have correctly identified that attendance is not high enough. The proportion of pupils who are absent from school, especially disadvantaged pupils, is too high. It is also the case that too many pupils are persistently absent, i.e. have missed 10% or more of their schooling. Stringent measures are in place to improve attendance, and you can demonstrate that the longer pupils are at the school, the better their attendance becomes. However, improving attendance remains an urgent priority.

Governance has been considerably strengthened over recent years. Governors have a good understanding of what is going well and what needs to be improved. They are rigorous in holding school leaders to account and have had a positive impact

through their own monitoring on, for example, the provision of extra-curricular activities for disadvantaged pupils. The chair of the governing body spoke of how the school is a 'listening school', and I could see for myself how school leaders have embraced the support available from the Derby Diocesan Academy Trust. In return, some aspects of the school's work are now used as examples of best practice by the trust, for example the very strong provision in the early years.

The pupils with whom I met told me that what they like most about their school is that they learn interesting things and that it is a good place to make friends. They told me the good behaviour that I observed, both in lessons and around school, was typical. In all the lessons you and I visited together, we observed pupils working hard, concentrating well and cooperating well together. Pupils told me that they would like to have more opportunities to learn music. Some curriculum subjects are merged into a part of the timetable called 'enrichment' but, because you cannot be sure that pupils are being taught sufficiently well enough across all subjects and year groups, you will be beginning a review of the curriculum next term.

Parents and carers with whom I spoke were all very positive about the school. Common themes were how friendly and approachable the staff were, the warm, welcoming atmosphere and the 'family feel' of the school. A typical parental comment was that coming into the school always felt like receiving 'a warm hug'. The very large majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online survey were positive. All the staff who completed the online survey said that they felt proud to work at the school. A typical comment was, 'Every decision we make is for the children and nobody else.' Staff appreciate the consideration school leaders give to their workload, for example, by changing the marking policy to make it more manageable for staff.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong and tangible culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are knowledgeable about how to recognise vulnerable children and know what to do to help them. The systems and procedures for keeping children safe are robust and fit for purpose. You keep copious logs and records of all significant incidents and use these logs to monitor any patterns or trends. As the designated lead for safeguarding, you know the vulnerable pupils and families very well. You and your colleagues are tenacious in battling on behalf of pupils who are at risk of harm. Leaders work effectively with parents, carers and external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and secure. The procedures for ensuring that all staff and volunteers are suitable and are fully trained in safeguarding are efficient and effective. Governors regularly check that this is the case.

Risk assessments are comprehensive and detailed and you recently reviewed them all with the whole staff team to ensure that everyone fully understood and could implement them. All the pupils with whom I spoke could give me examples of ways in which they had learned how to stay safe at school, and they all said they could speak to a trusted adult at school if they ever had a concern. The pupils' online survey confirmed that they feel safe at school. Safeguarding is built into the weekly

routines of the curriculum through regular circle time and 'tell me' notes, whereby pupils feel secure in sharing any worries or anxieties they might have.

## **Inspection findings**

- One of my key lines of enquiry was around the teaching and learning of mathematics at key stage 1. School leaders recognise the improvement focus over the last few years has been on reading and writing and now it is the right time to concentrate more on further improving pupils' achievement in mathematics. Outcomes have improved in this subject, especially in key stage 1 this year. The joint lesson observations and work scrutiny confirmed promoting pupils' reasoning skills is generally well planned for in the teaching of mathematics. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They work hard and present their work neatly and tidily. In most cases, pupils make strong progress. However, some pupils, particularly the most able, do not make the progress that they are capable of because the work they are provided with does not have an appropriate level of challenge.
- Our joint work scrutiny confirmed there were some weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics which need to be addressed. These included some inconsistencies in expectations, particularly for the most able, and some examples of work not well matched to pupils' learning needs. There was also some lack of coherence in the planning of the mathematics curriculum. Your unflinching rigour, high expectations and determination that teaching must be of the highest standard were evident throughout our scrutiny of pupils' books.
- My second focus was on the teaching and learning in reading. The determination of school leaders to make reading a priority is evident. As you explained, this is not just a matter of pupils being well prepared to pass tests, but it is about promoting a love of reading. The 'Book Club' in all classes from Year 2 to Year 6 is well established and pupils love it. As they move through the school, they are exposed to a wide range of high-quality children's literature. This is backed up by a carefully planned programme of teaching reading, which is based on pupils self-selecting titles from a prescribed range of suitably challenging books and then, having finished the books, completing quizzes, which allow teachers to assess how well they have understood what they have read. This approach is effective and, as a consequence, pupils' reading skills are consistently improving. Last year, almost half the pupils in Year 2 had not met the expected standard in reading by the end of the year, but this year, in Year 3, many have caught up and are now attaining well.
- Leaders do not have a precise idea of whether the knowledge pupils are learning across all subjects is building effectively on things they already know, and that they remember sufficient of what they are taught. You have already made plans to review this aspect shortly, so you can be confident that pupils make good progress in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Finally, I examined how well school leaders spent the pupil premium. These funds are allocated appropriately for disadvantaged pupils. Careful consideration is given to reviewing the success and impact of the various strategies used each year, and school leaders are not afraid to change course when required. The

progress of disadvantaged pupils is always the first priority when assessment results are analysed, and those pupils who are identified as falling behind receive extra tuition to help them to catch up. Governors are closely involved in holding school leaders to account for how the funding is spent. The school's own assessment data indicates there is still a difference in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others, but this is diminishing. Most disadvantaged pupils make at least expected progress in all subjects. However, still, too few of these pupils reach the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils also remains below average.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in mathematics, work is carefully matched to pupils' levels of ability so all pupils are appropriately challenged and make the progress of which they are capable
- attendance, especially for disadvantaged pupils, is improved to be at least in line with the national average
- leaders check that the curriculum is planned and delivered well in all subjects so that pupils' knowledge is built sufficiently over time.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Strauss  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

In advance of the inspection, I examined relevant performance data and scrutinised documents and information on the school's website. During the inspection I met with staff, parents and the pupil 'Ambassadors'. I checked the school's single central record and the recruitment and induction processes, as well as the training logs and risk assessments. Together with the headteacher, I conducted joint learning walks and visited every class in school. I held a series of meetings throughout the day and heard six pupils from three different year groups read. Together with the key stage team leaders, we scrutinised a sample of pupils' work. I also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and with the head of school improvement from the Derby Diocesan Academy Trust. I reviewed the results of Ofsted online surveys, which had 20 responses from parents, 18 responses from staff and 72 responses from the pupils.