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Jim Holditch
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Holditch

Short inspection of St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 March 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 the school was judged to be good in January 2015.

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 after a turbulent time with staffing, you have built a positive culture where staff feel valued and parents feel involved. The harmonious atmosphere created by pupils and staff is reflected in their positive relationships with one another.

You have built effective systems to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make improved progress. While disadvantaged pupils are not yet achieving as well as other pupils nationally by end of key stage 2, teachers give pupils the very best opportunities to catch up, particularly in mathematics. Lessons are engaging and introduce disadvantaged pupils to exciting texts that inspire them to read and write well. You have a clear understanding of the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils and have produced effective plans to address this.

Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum. In physical education, they are given opportunities to learn tennis taught by a specialist coach. In music, they are taught a range of instruments including brass, guitars and drums. The school has introduced a link with a school in France and leaders are developing Spanish as a language across the school. The school has been accredited with the 'UNICEF Silver Rights Respecting School' award in recognition of its commitment to human rights. Pupils write well. However, the quality and breadth of writing seen in writing books is not yet replicated across other subjects consistently. While the curriculum is broad, the sequence of learning in some subjects is not yet consistent.

Although school leaders and governors are aware of this, more needs to be done to empower subject leaders to ensure that pupils make strong progress across a wide range of subjects.

Pupils enjoy school and behave well in lessons. School leaders carefully track the attendance of all pupils, meeting with families of pupils whose attendance is low to help them improve. Pupils understand the school's rewards and sanctions and feel adults uphold these fairly. Relationships between pupils and adults are strong. Pupils feel empowered to help one another and are trained as 'peer mediators', taking this role seriously in supporting their peers to be happy while at play.

At the time of the previous inspection you were working on improving teaching, strengthening progress in writing and improving the skills of all subject leaders. You have ensured that pupils' progress in writing has improved as a result of an increasingly consistent approach to the teaching of writing across key stage 1 and key stage 2. While you have developed the core subject leaders well, you rightly state in your plan for improvement that subject leaders across a wide range of subjects need to be developed to ensure they create a balance of subjects taught so pupils can build effectively on prior learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have strong systems in place to make sure all staff and volunteers who work in the school are suitable to work with children. These checks are recorded carefully, and governors monitor the quality of these records. Staff and volunteers are trained regularly to make sure they are aware of school procedures to keep pupils safe. This ensures that staff are clear about who to speak with if they have a concern about a child's welfare or safety.

Pupils feel safe. They have positive relationships with one another and feel confident to speak with a trusted adult if they have a worry. Risk assessments are undertaken for activities within school and for trips out of school. Parents trust you and school staff to ensure their child is safe.

Inspection findings

- Current disadvantaged pupils progress well. School leaders and governors ensure that the funding for current disadvantaged pupils is spent well. Teachers and school leaders have a detailed understanding of the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils and work hard to overcome them. Work seen in books shows that disadvantaged pupils are progressing well, particularly in maths and writing. However, although differences are diminishing, disadvantaged pupils' progress is not yet in line with other pupils nationally. They are not always given enough opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide enough range of subjects.
- The teaching of phonics is good. This has led to strong outcomes in the Year 1 phonics test. Phonics teaching in the early years helps children to progress well.

Children are taught key phonic sounds and can apply these when reading unfamiliar words. As pupils move into Year 1, they use their phonics knowledge to read with increasing confidence and enjoyment. By Year 6, pupils have a love of reading and delve into quality texts with enthusiasm. As a result, pupils can answer increasingly challenging questions about the books they read.

- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has successfully improved both provision for pupils and communication with families. Teachers and teaching assistants have received valuable training to support the needs of pupils with SEND. Governors are diligent in monitoring the support for pupils with SEND and ensuring its effectiveness. As a result, provision is robust and pupils with SEND make strong progress from their starting points.
- Pupils do not consistently develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects. While the curriculum is broad and balanced, the sequence of learning in some subjects is limited. Subject leaders do not yet have a clear understanding of how well pupils progress in their subject. While some subjects, such as history and science, have a range of work produced across the year; other subjects, such as geography and art, do not.
- Pupils have plenty of opportunities to write in their writing books. Recent changes to the teaching of writing have led to pupils producing strong writing in a range of genres. During our visits to class, we saw pupils in Year 5 writing poetry based on a book about Shackleton, while pupils in Year 6 produced letters as evacuees based on the book 'Goodnight Mister Tom'. The progress in writing for more-able pupils is particularly strong. However, while opportunities to write are varied within writing lessons, writing across a broad range of subjects is limited.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they develop further opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across a wide range of subjects
- the sequencing of learning is strong across all subjects by:
 - empowering subject leaders to monitor the progression of knowledge, skills and understanding in their subject
 - planning topic work that creates a balance of subjects taught so pupils can build effectively on prior learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Graham Chisnell
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with you and several other leaders. I spoke with representatives of the governing body, a representative from the Rochester Diocesan Board of Education and a representative from Kent local authority. I spoke to pupils informally and formally. I made short visits with you to all classes and looked at a range of pupils' books. I spoke to parents at the end of the day and considered 49 responses, including 46 free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered 11 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

I scrutinised various documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's plan for improvement, and documents that you use to track the progress of pupils with SEND. I considered the documents published on the school website. We discussed the national test results and records of attendance and behaviour. I also reviewed monitoring reports from the governing body.