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5 June 2019

Ms Nicky Phillips  
Headteacher  
St Michael's Church of England Primary School  
The Causeway  
Larkhill  
Salisbury  
SP4 8FB

Dear Ms Phillips

### **Short inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 May 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 February 2012.

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

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

There have been significant changes to leadership and staffing since the school joined the Salisbury Plain Academies multi-academy trust in 2016. This led to a lack of continuity. Since you began in post in January 2017, you have firmly established yourself as a well-respected and dedicated leader. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support you provide. They feel motivated, well respected and valued.

In September 2018, the school moved to a new building. Since then, the number of pupils on roll has doubled. This is set to double again in September 2019. You and trustees are working hard to ensure that the school does not lose its 'family feel' as it increases in size.

Three quarters of pupils come from service families, which means that many pupils join and leave the school at different points in their school career. You understand the potential impact of this and make sure that pupils are well prepared when they join and leave school. The school's arrangements to ensure pupils settle quickly when they first arrive at their new school are exceptionally strong. This helps leaders to gain a good understanding of pupils' needs and develop effective partnerships with parents.

The vast majority of parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They typically comment on your effective leadership and enthusiastic staff. They also

praise the way in which adults supported pupils when they moved into the new school building. A typical comment from a parent was, 'So much effort has gone into creating a positive, nurturing and interesting learning environment.'

Trustees and members of the Academy Advisory Board (AAB) routinely visit the school to meet leaders and review outcomes for pupils. This helps them to check the school's effectiveness.

Pupils are a credit to the school. They have delightful manners and are sociable and welcoming. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and behave well. Pupils attend school regularly, which enables them to benefit from all that the school has to offer. Pupils say they feel safe at school and parents agree. Pupils confirm that there is always someone to talk to if they have any worries.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school because adults are vigilant and prioritise pupils' welfare. You provide staff with regular updates to safeguarding training and they know how to recognise when a pupil might be at risk. Staff understand how to refer any concerns they have about a pupil's welfare. You do not hesitate to make timely and appropriate referrals to external agencies when necessary. This ensures that pupils and their families receive specialist help. You routinely follow up your actions to check they are making a difference.

You undertake all necessary checks to ensure that adults working in the school are safe to work with children. You thoroughly record these details on the school's single central record. Several staff are trained to support pupils' medical needs. There are well understood procedures in the event of an emergency.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, I wanted to check leaders' actions to improve pupils' progress in reading, mathematics and English spelling, punctuation and grammar at key stage 2. This is because, over time, pupils have not achieved consistently well in these subjects. I also wanted to find out if recent improvements to writing at key stage 2 have been sustained.
- Subject leaders have a good awareness of the school's priorities and this has enabled them to improve teaching. For example, they have provided training to enhance teachers' subject knowledge successfully.
- The mathematics leader's actions ensure that teaching encompasses all aspects of the mathematics curriculum well. For example, teaching enables pupils to apply their skills and knowledge in order to reason, justify their answers, and solve problems well.
- The English leader has taken action to improve the teaching of reading and writing successfully. Teaching supports pupils to deepen their understanding of what they read. Pupils regularly practise and apply the spelling, punctuation and grammar rules they have learned. Pupils edit their writing to improve it. This is

developing their capacity to improve the complexity of their writing with increasing success.

- The school's latest assessment information and pupils' work confirm that the majority of pupils in key stage 2 are making effective progress in reading and writing. However, teaching in mathematics is not as strong, particularly for younger pupils. As a result, fewer pupils achieve well in mathematics compared to other subjects.
- During the inspection, I also wanted to establish if recent improvements in writing and mathematics at key stage 1 are being sustained. The reason for this is that there was a significant increase in the proportion of pupils achieving well in these subjects in 2018.
- As a result of effective teaching in key stage 1, pupils make strong progress in all subjects and achieve well. Pupils form letters correctly and use their secure knowledge of phonics to spell words with increasing accuracy. Pupils talk about what they want to write. This is developing their vocabulary and ability to construct sentences correctly. In mathematics, pupils apply their skills in division to work out corresponding multiplication facts. Pupils recognise fractions such as  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  and can add two-digit numbers.
- Finally, I wanted to find out how effectively additional support, especially in writing and mathematics, helps pupils who need to catch up, particularly pupils with SEND. This is because, in the past, outcomes for these pupils have been variable and their attendance has sometimes been lower than other pupils.
- The newly appointed SENCO is already using her expertise to ensure that provision is well planned to meet pupils' specific needs. She is building on the effective work of the previous SENCO and working closely with pupils and staff. This is enabling her to support pupils' pastoral and academic needs. Pupils with SEND attend school regularly.
- Pastoral help enables pupils to manage their emotions appropriately. It is improving pupils' confidence and self-esteem and fostering positive attitudes to learning. Parents speak favourably about the support their children receive.
- You provide focused additional teaching for pupils with SEND. This enables some pupils to undertake work similar to their peers. However, several pupils with SEND, particularly those who have complex needs or who have recently joined the school, make weaker academic progress. This aspect is a priority for improvement.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve teaching in mathematics in lower key stage 2 so that pupils achieve their full potential
- additional academic support for pupils who need to catch up, particularly pupils with SEND, consistently ensures that they achieve well.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Beeks  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, you and I had several meetings. I visited the school's breakfast club and had informal conversations with staff. I held formal meetings with the SENCO and also the subject leaders for English and mathematics. I met with trustees and members of the AAB. I held a separate meeting with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.

I checked the school's single central record and reviewed the school's safeguarding records and procedures. We discussed the school's latest assessment information and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. You and I jointly observed lessons in all classes. During this time, we scrutinised pupils' mathematics and writing books. I spoke with pupils in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime.

I spoke with several parents at the beginning of the school day and reviewed 27 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, along with 16 additional free-text comments. I considered 18 responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and 31 responses to the online pupils' survey.