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Mrs R Ross
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Ross

Short inspection of East Crompton St George's CofE School

Following my visit to the school on 3 May 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 2013.

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 your recent appointment, you have quickly established the school's current priorities. You have correctly identified areas to improve, based on a detailed analysis of assessment information. These are key focuses in this year's plans for school improvement.

Leaders have created an environment with care and nurture at the heart of the school, driven successfully by your Christian values. You are effectively assisted by your senior leaders and your enthusiastic staff team.

Over recent years, leaders have faced significant challenges related to staffing. This has not only affected the quality of teaching but also leadership capacity within the school. Leaders have responded with resilience to the situation. The leadership now shows capacity to work on the identified areas from accurate assessment and self-evaluation. The multi-academy trust has been proactive in supporting leaders with identifying school improvement priorities. Members of the interim management board have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They provide appropriate challenge and support, including the use of school-improvement advisers to accelerate school improvement. Areas that were targeted for improvement have shown progress, for example in mathematics. There are also regular opportunities to share

good practice across the trust. This is helping in the development of teaching skills, especially for those who are new to the profession.

The majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, were positive about the work of the school. One comment summed up the feelings of many parents, saying: 'I feel that the school has been through a lot of upheaval and the staff have been holding the school together well. My children have always enjoyed coming to school.' Parents told me they could see improvements after your recent appointment. Pupils told me they were proud of their school. They value the support that they receive from staff, especially the explanations they give to help them in their work. Pupils particularly enjoy science because of the opportunities provided to investigate the world around them.

During the inspection, we considered areas where further work is required to support your school improvement. Although the areas for development for the school have been identified by leaders, many of the strategies in place are too recent to be able to measure impact. You are aware that the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school is high. We agreed that this should reduce to a level at least in line with the national average. We also agreed that teachers should provide more challenging work across the curriculum to improve outcomes, especially for the middle-ability pupils. We discussed the need for pupils to take greater pride in their work and improve presentation. Finally, we agreed that recent strategies to improve pupils' achievement in reading, writing and in mathematics should continue to be embedded. This is to secure sustained, strong progress for all groups of pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a culture of care and support which runs throughout the school. Leaders attend regular safeguarding meetings led by members of the local authority. You ensure that staff receive relevant training in safeguarding. As a result they have a clear awareness of child-protection procedures, including an understanding of signs of abuse. Members of the trust regularly check safeguarding arrangements, including the security of the school site.

Adults teach pupils how to stay safe. For example, pupils know how to stay safe online. Pupils told me that they feel safe and know how to stay safe. Pupils say that where there are rare instances of bullying, adults are effective at dealing with them so they eventually stop. They told me behaviour in school is improving.

Leaders take effective action to ensure that pupils get the help they need. Parents spoken with during the inspection told me they are grateful for the support leaders have given them and their children during difficult times.

Inspection findings

- At the start of this inspection I shared with you a number of lines of enquiry. The first of these considered the actions taken by leaders to improve outcomes in reading.

Leaders analyse pupils' reading assessments to identify the key reading skills which need strengthening and plan daily lessons that focus on pupils' development of these key skills. As a result, children get off to a good start in reading in Reception and effective teaching of phonics also means that most pupils reach the required standard by the end of Year 1. Teachers read quality books and text extracts to pupils. This is developing their love of reading and also helping to stimulate their writing. As a result of these actions, the school's own data shows that progress in reading is now stronger across school. However, we did agree that leaders should build on recent improvements in the teaching of reading to further improve progress across the school.

- We also discussed the level of challenge that learning provides. You have recently increased the expectations of what pupils can achieve. Through regular pupil progress meetings with teachers you are increasing teachers' focus on all groups of pupils. There are indications that your work is having a positive effect, particularly in mathematics. The school's own progress information shows that progress for the most able and least able pupils is improving. Leaders now place a stronger emphasis on progress and your thorough assessment systems enable you to track groups of pupils more effectively. However, recent strategies have not had time to impact in all year groups. Some pupils say that they find their work easy at times. There is also a lack of challenge for middle-ability pupils. We have agreed that this will remain an area that leaders and teachers continue to focus on as part of school improvement. We also agreed that pupils' presentation skills across the curriculum should improve. This is because many are showing a lack of pride in the work that they produce.
- The new assessment and tracking system also ensures that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is now closely tracked. This has not been the case until recently. Teachers now use the assessment system to provide work which is more closely aligned to the needs of disadvantaged pupils. Additional support provided for them is also having a positive impact on their progress. As a consequence, the progress and attainment of this group is showing signs of improvement, especially in mathematics. In the majority of year groups the difference in attainment and progress between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is diminishing.
- You monitor the attendance of all pupils very closely, particularly those who are vulnerable. You are aware that, in recent years, the attendance of some groups of pupils has been too low. You identified this as one of your first priorities as a new leader. You have raised expectations around attendance. As a consequence, the attendance of targeted pupils has increased. Nevertheless, overall persistent absence rates remain high and recent strategies have not yet had time to fully embed. Leaders recognise that they have further work to do to address this issue.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school is reduced to a level at least in line with the national average
- they make sure that teachers consistently provide challenging work across the curriculum, especially for the middle-ability pupils

- pupils take greater pride in their work and improve presentation
- they embed recent strategies to improve pupils' achievement in reading, writing and in mathematics to secure strong, sustained progress.

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 Manchester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Oldham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Hunter
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher. I also met with members of the interim management board and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust. I had a formal discussion with a group of pupils and met with your senior administrator.

Accompanied by you and the deputy headteacher, I visited classes in the school to observe pupils' learning. I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and as they moved around the school. I scrutinised examples of pupils' work and reviewed documents, including your record of checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children, the school's self-evaluation, and improvement plan and assessment information. I considered information posted on the school's website. I also took account of the 12 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 67 responses from the pupil survey and 12 responses from the staff survey.