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Mrs Sandra Gibb  
Headteacher  
St George's Beneficial Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School  
Hanover Street  
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PO1 3BN

Dear Mrs Gibb

### **Short inspection of St George's Beneficial Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 July 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 the school was judged to be good in November 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Building on the school's core values, senior leaders and governors have developed a nurturing, inclusive school community. Pupils and families from a wide range of different backgrounds and circumstances find a warm welcome from staff. All at the school work hard to overcome pupils' many barriers to learning, secure pupils' well-being, and enable them to make good progress.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They have strong attitudes to learning and work hard to achieve their best. The curriculum is wide and varied, providing pupils with a range of memorable experiences, including visits to such places as the Milestones Museum, the Globe Theatre and the British Museum. Older pupils also enjoy opportunities to work with a local film company to write, direct and produce short films in a range of genres, using professional-quality equipment.

Parents and carers are mostly positive about the school and the way that staff look after the pupils. One parent said, 'Pupils enjoy their learning at school. They are happy with friends, and love their teachers. We find the teachers are approachable and supportive.' Pupils also appreciate the way that everyone is respected and treated as individuals. One pupil reflected this when saying, 'Everyone is equal. You are allowed to be yourself here.'

Children get off to a good start in the early years. By the time they join Year 1 their

attainment is in line with national figures. Children who are disadvantaged make stronger rates of progress than other children. A well-resourced outside area contributes well to children's learning and addresses one of the areas that inspectors asked you to improve at the previous inspection.

The school has high levels of mobility. This means that a number of pupils do not have key stage 1 scores. Some pupils take the key stage 2 national tests and assessments having spent only a short time in your school. Some are at the early stages of learning English. The progress of pupils who join your school in Years 5 and 6 is much less than that of pupils who are with you from the start of key stage 2. Published rates of progress, therefore, do not show the full picture. Despite this, early indications show that improvements in teaching, learning and assessment are paying off. In 2017, published information showed that progress in writing dipped sharply to well below the national average, especially for boys. Pupils are making better progress in 2018 than last year, as a result of more effective teaching this year. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in key stage 2. However, due to high mobility levels and some weak teaching in the past, boys' attainment lags behind that of girls, both in reading and writing.

The recently formed governing body has a broad understanding of the school, gained by collecting evidence from a range of sources, including their own visits to the school. However, they lack a clear understanding of how to hold senior leaders stringently to account. Governors require more support and training so that they can bring greater rigour to their role. Senior leaders ensure that school development plans focus on the most important areas for improvement and contain specific goals. This addressed one of the areas that inspectors asked leaders to improve at the previous inspection. Inspectors also asked leaders to increase opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills through practical problem solving and investigation. We saw several examples of pupils solving challenging problems and using their mathematical reasoning.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Senior leaders ensure that staff in the school have effective training in a wide range of safeguarding matters, so that all are clear about how to identify and report any concerns about pupils. Pupils feel safe in school because they rightly trust staff to take care of them and to listen to any concerns that they have. 'Worry monster' boxes in each class provide a place for pupils to post notes of any problems or concerns that they have. Pupils say that this helps them to put worries out of their mind. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about staying safe. Pupils are taught to stay safe on the road and online. Visits from the fire brigade and the police also help them to learn about other aspects of safety.

Policies, protocols and procedures are fit for purpose and have been reviewed regularly in recent years. However, senior leaders and governors must ensure that the child protection and safeguarding policies are always reviewed at least annually. Governors play their role in undertaking checks of various aspects of safeguarding including the checks to ensure that only suitable people are allowed to work in the

school.

## **Inspection findings**

- We agreed to look at three aspects of the school's work during this inspection. The first was to consider the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve outcomes in writing at the end of key stage 2, especially for boys. In recent years boys have made much less progress and attained less well than girls especially in writing. Senior leaders have introduced a range of strategies to engage boys' interest in reading and writing. Teachers have chosen texts and topics that are designed to appeal to boys and give them an interest in reading and writing. Improved teaching in key stage 2 is driving improved outcomes.
- The gaps in attainment and progress between boys and girls are narrowing this year. However, there is still work to do to ensure that more boys than previously achieve the expected standards in reading and writing.
- We then looked at how well teaching in key stage 1 enables pupils to make the most of the strong start they receive in the early years, especially in reading and writing. In recent years, pupils' attainment has dipped in Year 1. Leaders have taken decisive action to improve teaching in this year group. The assistant headteacher has taught in Year 1 this year and provided a strong model of effective practice for other teachers to follow.
- Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 1 dropped in 2017 as a result of staff turbulence. Provisional results show that levels of attainment improved slightly in 2018 key stage 1 national assessments due to improved teaching and more stable staffing this year. However, there is still work to be done to ensure that the improvements in teaching, especially in Year 1, are reflected in higher levels of attainment at the end of Year 2.
- You have very successfully boosted the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1. However, despite strong improvements more needs to be done to ensure that all pupils leave Year 2 ready to cope with the reading demands of key stage 2.
- The last line of enquiry was to do with leaders' work to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence, especially for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Leaders take attendance very seriously and work tirelessly to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and can point to some pupils whose attendance has improved markedly. Absence rates are affected negatively by pupils who leave the school to return to homes overseas but remain on the school roll.
- Staff engage rigorously with parents and pupils to reinforce the importance of being in school every day. Senior leaders have implemented a range of strategies to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. Where necessary, they have engaged the support of external agencies to improve pupils' attendance. This has had a positive impact on levels of attendance, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors receive the right training and support so they can hold senior leaders more closely to account for all aspects of their work
- the quality of teaching is as good as the best seen in the school so that pupils who need to do so make rapid progress and catch up
- staff provide good opportunities to engage boys' interest in reading and writing so that more reach the expected standard at the end of key stage 2.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Portsmouth (CE), the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Portsmouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Bruce Waelend  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the deputy and assistant headteachers to discuss various aspects of the school's work. I also met with four members of the governing body and spoke with two representatives of the local authority on the telephone. I visited classes in all year groups with either the deputy headteacher or assistant headteacher to observe teaching and learning, to talk to pupils and look at their work. Together with senior leaders, I conducted a work scrutiny of books from all year groups. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school. I had a meeting with 13 pupils drawn from Years 1 to 6. I considered 24 responses to the staff survey, 11 responses to the pupil survey and one response to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as speaking to several parents at the beginning of the day. A range of documents, including the school improvement plans and safeguarding policies, procedures and checks were also taken into account. I was accompanied by one of Her Majesty's inspectors for this inspection, who quality-assured the inspection process.