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Mr Mark Alexander-Smale  
Principal  
St Augustine of Canterbury C of E Primary School  
St Augustine's Road  
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DA17 5HP

Dear Mr Alexander-Smale

### **Short inspection of St Augustine of Canterbury C of E Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 25 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 school was judged to be good in April 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. All adults at the school share the school's ethos, which is based on Christian values. The strong and inclusive family atmosphere results in high attendance. Governors and representatives of the trust work together to provide a balanced approach to support and challenge school leaders. Leaders recognise the recent dip in key stage 2 outcomes, and are striving to improve the education for pupils at the school.

The trust supports leaders' work. Book scrutiny, where schools in the trust compare the quality of pupils' work, is an example of how the school ensures consistency and receives quality assurance. Professional development is also provided by the trust. The school is challenged by leaders, termly, from other schools in the trust. This reciprocal arrangement provides leaders with a critical eye to bring to their own school. Leaders are more able to challenge each other and other adults across the school. Leaders act on advice from the trust. For example, 'Your Stretch and Challenge' is a system implemented by teachers, and it came from another school in the trust.

Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive appropriate support. Leaders place significant emphasis on reading. They appreciate that, through reading, pupils access all subjects across the curriculum. For example, the wider curriculum is emphasised by all teachers. For example, plastics and recycling are discussed, and pupils understand the environmental impact of using plastic.

Reception children were seen writing sentences. They used their reading skills to improve their writing. For example, they decode words using their phonics skills and improve their spelling. They systematically use finger-spacing to separate their words and make their writing clear. Verbal feedback and self-reflection is encouraged in the same way as for older pupils at the school. This ensures continuity in pupils' learning.

Areas identified for improvement following the previous inspection have been addressed. In lessons, activities encourage children to write numerals. They clearly write numbers from 0-20, and they use their number lines to create subtraction sums.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders ensure that all staff receive regular training so that they maintain their safeguarding vigilance. New members of staff receive specific training on safeguarding so that they can protect children at the school. Training is extensive, and it covers the risks that pupils may be exposed to. For example, recent training covered gang membership, and led to age-appropriate information being shared with pupils. Leaders, including governors, make staff appointments using their safer recruitment skills. This means that only appropriate adults work with children at the school.

Leaders support the safety of pupils when they are online. Outside experts share their knowledge with pupils. For example, pupils have been taught about cyberbullying. Pupils told me that they are kept safe at the school because adults understand them and help them if they have a problem. They also told me that they like the calm atmosphere when arriving at school in the morning.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on two lines of enquiry. The first was based on the quality of reading in key stage 2. This was identified because leaders recognise the impact that the quality of pupils' reading has across their learning.
- Middle leaders have recently introduced a reading programme that enables pupils to take ownership of their learning. Books are selected that lead to flexible themes. Pupils are empowered to plan their learning from their initial questions and interests. For example, pupils recently read a story that took place during the Second World War. This led to discussions on the First World War, which, in turn, led to pupils researching further information.
- Leaders understand pupils' reading abilities. They know that EAL pupils have high literacy levels, but do not have the equivalent breadth of vocabulary. Leaders are addressing this in a number of ways, including promoting a word of the week. Pupils are exposed to a range of cultural activities. For example, they create their own dictionaries. When pupils come across a new word, they add it to their list

and include a definition to help them remember it.

- Leaders prioritise the importance of reading. Parents told me that the school places considerable emphasis on reading, and that they appreciate the support the school provides for reading. They participate in the home-school reading record, and they celebrate when their children begin to read more challenging books.
- Assemblies are used to deepen pupils' vocabulary. For example, new words are introduced to the whole school, and they are reinforced so that pupils improve their recall. Leaders use external speakers to celebrate reading. During these sessions, pupils are reminded of their favourite texts. Many of the books mentioned have been read by some pupils, and their peers are encouraged to read them.
- Some Year 3 and 4 pupils lack the vocabulary necessary to fully understand their reading books. For example, they decoded words well from their assigned reading books. However, they were not routinely able to explain some of what they had read.
- The second line of enquiry was based on pupils' progress in key stage 2. This was identified as a focus because, recently, Year 6 had performed below national expectations at the end of 2018.
- As a result of accurate assessment, leaders were aware of the potential for these pupils to underperform in their final tests. Support and interventions were put in place for them early in key stage 2. This resulted in some improvement, but the additional help was not sufficient to ensure that all pupils made strong enough progress.
- Leaders have changed the way they check gaps in pupils' understanding. Now, when a pupil does not understand an aspect of their learning, teachers intervene with targeted support. This was introduced recently and has had a positive impact on key stage 2 pupils' performance. For example, in mathematics, middle leaders identified that pupils were not proficient in measures. Subsequently, leaders adapted the curriculum to include the use of measures, whenever this was appropriate.
- Recent internal assessments, checked by the trust, show that Year 6 pupils are on track to make progress in line with their peers nationally. Work in books reflects this progress. For example, pupils solved a complex problem in a variety of ways, including using trial and improvement, and algebra.
- Subject leaders across the trust meet once a term. A recent agenda item focused on how to improve pupils' recall of times tables. As a result, the school decided to subscribe to a times tables application. The competitive nature of this programme appeals to pupils, and they enjoy competing against other schools and their teachers.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' vocabulary, especially for pupils with EAL, continues to develop and improve their reading skills so that these are at least the same as their peers nationally
- improvements in pupils' progress at key stage 2 in core subjects leads to improved outcomes overall.

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

Yours sincerely

Jason Hughes  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I looked at a range of pupils' work together with middle and senior leaders. I met with governors and with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust. Leaders accompanied me on visits to lessons where we observed teaching and learning, spoke with pupils and looked at their work. I examined a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, including the single central record of staff checks.

I scrutinised Ofsted's online survey for parents (11 responses) and associated commentary (7 comments), the staff survey (12 responses), and responses to the pupils' survey (19 responses). I examined the school's website and reviewed information about pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. I also considered the school's evaluation of how well it is doing, its improvement priorities and assessment information for current pupils.