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Mrs G Constable
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Constable

Short inspection of St George's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 February 2016, 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 June 2011.

This school continues to be good.

You have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your skilful management of changes to staff, and the well-managed expansion of the school premises, has ensured that the priorities for improvement identified at the last inspection have been tackled well. Senior leaders have an extensive knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' academic performance and pastoral needs. Since the reorganisation shortly after the last inspection, and further training, governors are also better informed about the impact of your work on outcomes for pupils.

You have used your astute analysis to decide what to concentrate on so that the quality of teaching improves. A passionate belief that all pupils can grow their capacity to think and learn is at the heart of the culture you have established. Senior leaders have maintained a sharp focus on checking that teachers use the training and resources provided to make well-informed decisions when planning lessons. As a result, pupils are making even better progress in the current school year. Teachers provide regular and helpful guidance to support pupils' learning. Your checks on teaching have led you to realise that some teachers' skills in helping pupils make the most of this guidance need to be developed further.

Your plans for improvement are sharply focused on responding to the need to improve outcomes for particular groups of pupils. The work pupils have done in the current school year demonstrates that pupils in Key Stage 1 are making better progress in phonics (letters and the sounds they make). You have placed a priority on helping boys develop their early reading skills more rapidly. Most-able pupils in Key Stage 1 are making better progress in the current school year as a result of improvements to teaching and the growth of pupils' learning skills.

You have wisely invested in the development of the skills of your leaders at all levels. This has enabled leaders to help teachers set more appropriate work for pupils to attempt, which was an area for improvement last time the school was inspected. You correctly place a priority on the further development of middle leadership to help sustain the current rapid pace of improvement.

Since the last inspection, you have enriched opportunities for pupils to learn how people live beyond their immediate community. For example, pupils benefit from participating in a project with a school in Tenerife. Your curriculum policy is implemented well so that pupils learn skills in specific subjects which help them understand the wider world in more detail and ask interesting questions about it.

Safeguarding is effective.

Your staff are well trained to identify and respond appropriately to any small changes in pupils' behaviour which may indicate that their welfare is at risk. Newly-appointed staff say that they have been supported well by senior leaders to understand and implement the agreed safeguarding policies. You maintain strong relations with external partners to help you check that procedures reflect current guidance. Governors check on safeguarding matters regularly and from a well-informed viewpoint. They consider ongoing training needs carefully so that they maintain the skills and knowledge they need to fulfil their duties.

You select safeguarding training which is focused sharply on issues which are likely to be relevant to your parents and pupils. Support staff play a crucial role in securing the information necessary to make these decisions well and maintain effective communications with parents.

Pupils are confident about expressing their views very openly. This allows you to find out when any of them feel unsafe. Pupils take responsibility for helping one another whenever they can. You provide lots of opportunities for pupils to play a role in helping keep themselves safe and ensure that they learn about important issues such as bullying and internet safety as an everyday part of their learning. Pupils say that discriminatory behaviour is very rare and your records confirm this. You tackle any instance of more challenging behaviour robustly but supportively. As a result, your monitoring records show that pupils' behaviour has improved over time.

Your premises manager keeps a close eye on maintaining the procedures aimed at managing the risks presented by the current building expansion programme.

Inspection findings

- Leadership for the early years and Key Stage 1 has changed since the last inspection. These new leaders have been successful in ensuring that teachers use assessment information more effectively when setting work for pupils and targets for them to achieve. Pupils' work from the current school year demonstrates that rates of progress are improving as a result. However, senior leaders know that improvements in outcomes for most-able younger pupils and in early reading skills must remain a key priority.
- The Key Stage 1 leader is determined to improve the progress boys make in acquiring early reading skills. The latest checks on learning show that her work in leading on this priority is proving successful. Most-able pupils are making better progress towards the higher levels due to higher expectations of what can be achieved and better-informed teaching of learning skills.
- The early years leader has improved the quality of guidance children receive and enriching the dialogue between adults and children. Children are more confident at explaining their work and more resilient when tackling challenging tasks as a result. She is also developing and supporting the skills of teachers both new to the profession and school well, ensuring that they implement the agreed policies on teaching.
- There has been a concerted effort since the last inspection to improve the effectiveness with which teachers equip pupils to understand how they learn best and develop positive attitudes to learning. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are getting praise for and provide clear, regular guidance on improving their work. Pupils' work shows that some teachers are still more successful than others in ensuring that the best use is made of this guidance.
- The behaviour of pupils both in and out of lessons is very positive. The recently appointed senior leader for inclusion has ensured that instances of more challenging behaviour from a very small minority of pupils are declining as a result of more skilful teaching and a meticulous analysis of behaviour incidents.
- Senior leaders have enriched the curriculum and opportunities for pupils to learn since the last inspection. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the learning logs they use to extend their learning at home. Some of these demonstrate very high levels of commitment from pupils to learning outside of school. Teachers provide high-quality guidance to help pupils develop subject-specific skills. This helps them learn about how others live their lives both in the local community and in the wider world. The middle leaders responsible for driving improvements across the curriculum know their subjects well and senior leaders are committed to making sure their leadership skills develop further.
- Senior leaders have built a cohesive team of teachers and support staff who have the time and skills to build the confidence of parents and encourage them to play a more active part in pupils' learning. Leaders see this as essential in improving outcomes for the most-able pupils in particular. Levels of persistent absence have also reduced as a result of this work. These strong links between home and school are appreciated by parents and help make

sure school leaders remain alert to any emerging risks or concerns which may put the well-being of pupils at risk.

- The development of pupils' ability to assess risks, express their views and keep themselves safe is part of the whole curriculum, not just added on as an afterthought. Some pupils act as 'digital leaders' to help others stay safe when working online. Pupils contributed their own ideas to the recent review of the school's anti-bullying strategy. When some younger pupils became concerned about the large crane being used to help with building the school extension, leaders responded quickly by getting contractors to talk to pupils. They also enabled older pupils to set up a safety committee to consider any other concerns raised by pupils about the building work.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- Teachers continue to improve the skills they use in ensuring pupils make the most of the guidance they receive on how to improve their work.
- The skills of middle leaders in tackling the priorities for improvement continue to develop.
- The progress of pupils, and particularly boys, in developing their phonics skills continues to accelerate, so that the proportion reaching the expected standard by the end of Year 1 reaches at least national averages.
- The improved progress of more-able pupils in Key Stage 1 is maintained so that more reach the higher levels of attainment by the end of Year 2.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for the London Borough of Lewisham.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wright

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I held discussions with you and other school leaders at both senior and middle leadership level. I met with a group of teachers, including one new to the profession. I met with the Chair of the Governing Body and had a telephone conversation with the head of inclusion in the local authority. I conducted a tour of the school, looking at pupils' work and observing their learning. I spoke to pupils in lessons and met with a small group of pupils to discuss their views about the school. I considered the views which staff and pupils submitted in the electronic survey during the inspection. I also spoke to a number of parents and considered the views of the parent survey conducted by the school.