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Mr David Hugill
Headteacher
St Margaret's CofE (VC) Junior School
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Dear Mr Hugill

Short inspection of St Margaret's CofE (VC) Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 18 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 the school was judged to be good in March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

You provide good leadership for this welcoming, hard-working and successful school. You set the same high expectations of staff and pupils as you do for yourself. You lead by example, working constructively with your staff team to look continuously for ways to improve the school's work.

Your positive, professional and supportive approach to school leadership ensures that staff and governors feel valued and respected. Teachers regularly review their practice and are confident about seeking advice wherever needed. They are eager to play their part in securing further improvements in the school's work. For example, they have been quick to put recent developments in teaching of reading into practice in the classroom, securing notable improvements in the quality of pupils' learning.

Pupils say that they enjoy being part of the school's community. They are happy to come to school and be with their friends. For example, on the day of the inspection, all were dressed in red, white and blue outfits to celebrate the next day's royal wedding. They trust school staff implicitly and know that they will be kept safe. A girl explained that new children are welcomed freely, no matter what their background or life experience. This example is typical of the thoughtful, generous and positive attitudes that pupils have. Pupils behave impeccably in lessons and

around the school. They are friendly and polite, reflecting the three character virtues which the school has embedded in its ethos: Everyone is valued. Everyone is motivated. Everyone achieves.

The areas for improvement which were highlighted in the previous report have been fully addressed. For example, you have made changes to the quality of teaching so that it now focuses more closely on the actions that will boost pupils' achievement even further. You have also identified where adjustments are needed in teaching and taken steps to make sure that all teaching is becoming as effective as the very best. Evidence seen in pupils' books during our visits to classrooms indicated the vast majority of pupils are making good progress. Similarly, your school development plan includes measurable targets and you are able to gauge the success of actions that are taken.

There is an established, strong team of governors. They are rightly proud of the school's Christian ethos, which is inclusive of those from all faiths and those who have none. They have a clear view of the school's performance, share your high aspirations for all pupils and contribute effectively to the school's development. Governors meet with senior and middle leaders to understand the differences that they make to teaching and pupils' achievement when carrying out their roles.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and understood by staff. Detailed checks are completed meticulously on all those who work at the school to ensure that they are fit to do so. You, your staff and governors ensure that there is a strong culture of vigilance across the school. Staff undertake regular training to make sure that they are up to date with the most recent legislation. The designated safeguarding governor completes intensive checks to confirm that agreed procedures are adhered to fully.

You, as the school's designated safeguarding lead, have a very good understanding of safeguarding and an exceptionally strong commitment to supporting pupils and keeping them safe. Leaders follow up referrals swiftly and make sure that they get the best outcomes for the most vulnerable pupils. You have high expectations of other services, such as children's social care, and challenge them robustly when needed.

You and your staff know the pupils and their families very well and this is a real strength of the school. Relationships are positive and help pupils to feel safe. All staff who completed their questionnaire, and all parents and pupils who responded to Ofsted's online survey, agree that the school keeps pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- We began the inspection by investigating reasons for reading outcomes outperforming those in writing and mathematics. Since your appointment in September 2015, you have successfully implemented a new approach to teach

pupils reading comprehension skills and this has been highly effective. Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of increasingly challenging words and use these to aid their reading comprehension. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils confidently discussed the meaning of the word 'deterioration' and could use this to further understand issues concerning growing pollution in the world's oceans.

- Evidence found in pupils' books, and apparent through listening to pupils read, shows that current pupils, regardless of their starting points, make consistently strong progress. They read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age, and develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills. We agreed that it would be appropriate to develop further pupils' writing and mathematical skills to match those achieved in reading.
- Next, we focused on what leaders are doing to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress and attain highly in all their subjects. In 2017, at the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils did not make as much progress as other pupils nationally in writing and mathematics. Consequently, their attainment at the higher standards in writing and mathematics was below that of other pupils nationally.
- You have accurately identified the need to improve outcomes for this group of pupils and have taken effective action to address this. Leaders have set targets for class teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that there is a stronger focus on improving progress for pupils, including the disadvantaged. This year, the teaching of writing and mathematics has been given a greater focus.
- During our visits to classes, the work in disadvantaged pupils' books shows that they are making stronger progress in writing and mathematics and are working at the standards expected for their age. Pupils talked with confidence about how to improve their writing and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' writing and mathematical skills, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, are developed further to match those achieved in reading.

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

Yours sincerely

Steven Cartlidge
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, your literacy and numeracy coordinators and assessment manager. I met with three members of the governing body. You accompanied me on learning walks and we scrutinised pupils' work together during visits to lessons. I met with a group of pupils, to discuss their learning and school experiences. I took into consideration 33 responses to Parent View, 18 free-text responses from parents, and 15 pupil and 19 staff responses to the online surveys. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, documentation relating to safeguarding and assessment information on pupils' progress and attainment.