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Mr Ian Doswell  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Doswell

### **Short inspection of St John the Evangelist Church School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 the predecessor school was judged to be good in June 2013.

#### **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 effective, well-respected leadership to sustain a nurturing, learning community underpinned by a distinctly Christian ethos. You maintain a determined approach to raising pupils' achievement across the school. You work supportively with staff to improve their practice. You make rigorous checks to ensure that teaching and additional guidance secures the pupils' well-being as well as their good academic progress across the school.

Representatives of the multi-academy trust know the school well and have worked closely with you to provide additional challenge and help you to raise standards. You and your staff have responded positively to this challenge and continue to improve the school and pupils' achievements. Governors carefully consider your reports and those of academy leaders. They take account of published achievement data and information from their own visits to the school. Consequently, they have an accurate knowledge of the strengths and aspects of the school that require development. Governors provide effective challenge and work supportively with you and the staff, as a united team. Together you ensure that planned actions bring about the desired improvements. For example, additional funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Your leadership team has supported you well in promoting pupils' good behaviour and an above average rate of attendance. Pupils enjoy school and take a pride in

their work. They are very willing to learn and to help each other. The pupils I spoke with said, 'We are happy at school because our teachers help us and we know that we are learning well.' All the parents who I spoke with were convincing in their praise of the school, particularly in treating pupils equally, especially those with SEND. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire were equally appreciative. One parental comment, typical of others, was, 'The community feel within the school is great.'

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Senior school leaders, including local governors and officers of the trust, ensure that all the necessary safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. They work closely with the school's administrative staff to make sure that all records are of high quality and securely kept. Procedures are frequently reviewed and include checks of staff recruitment and attendance at safeguarding training. As a result, all staff have a good understanding of their responsibility to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. They work diligently to ensure that there is a strong culture around keeping children safe throughout the school.

Pupils say that there is rarely any bullying and that, if it does occur, then teachers 'deal with it straight away'. Pupils' responses to their questionnaire, and when questioned, show that they feel safe and well looked after at school, 'because teachers like us and care about us, as our friends do'. They talk about how older pupils look after younger pupils at breaktimes. They are knowledgeable about how to stay safe when using computers. The responses of parents and staff in their questionnaires all strongly support the view that children feel safe and are well-cared for at school. Typically, one parent wrote, 'St John's is a lovely school with very caring staff who are willing to go the extra mile for your child.' The school's records show the positive impact of leaders' actions, in consultation with parents and outside agencies, on keeping pupils safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- The first line of enquiry examined the effectiveness of actions taken to improve the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment across key stages 1 and 2. This was particularly in relation to the achievement of the most able pupils. Leaders have focused rightly on improving the quality of teaching and learning. You have engaged well with specialists in the multi-academy trust and made good use of teachers' expertise already in the school to bring about improvement. The provision of additional training for teachers, particularly to strengthen the accuracy of assessment, has raised their understanding of pupils' needs. This was evident in all classes and in samples of pupils' work, which indicate that it is set at an appropriate level of challenge. As a result, pupils across the range of ability now make consistently good progress.
- The second line of enquiry considered how leaders and teachers are working to match pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and writing with their high achievement in reading. This has been the main focus of the well-formulated school development plan this academic year. In particular, you have successfully

raised teachers' and pupils' expectations, which is evident in the very carefully and neatly presented work in writing and mathematics books.

- The positive effect of this action is also seen in the way the teachers use their good subject knowledge to strengthen the teaching of mathematics. Prompted by additional coaching from the subject leader, an increasing number of teachers question pupils effectively to encourage them to think more deeply and explain their ideas. For example, in Years 5 and 6, the pupils showed good development of their mathematical investigation and problem-solving skills. This could be seen in their answers to questions and in their written work. However, such effective questioning and pupils' reasoning skills are not developed consistently well in all classes. There is similar inconsistency in the degree to which pupils are able to use and develop their mathematical skills in other subjects. Consequently, some pupils, including the most able, who are capable of reaching the higher standard, are not yet doing so.
- You have sustained a similarly strong and effective focus on improving the teaching, learning and assessment of writing. The pupils' much improved and now extremely well-developed handwriting reflects the consistent emphasis placed on this across the school. When questioned, pupils proudly talk about their improved handwriting and demonstrate the boosted confidence and fluency that this skill gives to their written work. Teachers in all classes use high-quality, interesting texts to motivate pupils and to develop their understanding of a wider range of vocabulary. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4, enthused by 'The Amazing adventures of Edward Tulane', eagerly responded to the challenge of correcting 'marvellous mistakes' in punctuation and grammar. Pupils' work, especially in their writing books, shows good progress and improved quality of their writing. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to write across a stimulating curriculum. However, the quality of pupils' written work in other subjects varies across the classes and represents inconsistency in expectations. Similar inconsistency in the development of pupils' ability to spell words accurately remains a weaker aspect in pupils' writing. This still constrains some pupils from attaining at a greater depth.
- My final line of enquiry considered how well leaders and teachers ensure that children in early years learn effectively across a wide curriculum and are enabled to transfer successfully into key stage 1 classes. Children continue to make a successful start in the Reception class. Your support of the leader of early years has helped her to develop and utilise her skills effectively within the school and across the multi-academy trust. She has remodelled the early years curriculum to provide a wider range of learning experiences for the children. These improvements are promoting the children's at least good, and increasingly better, progress. For example, children learned well together in the 'factory' role play area. When questioned, children capably talked about their learning; one typical child comment was, 'I'm reflecting about my work.'
- The teachers and support assistant in the early years class assess the children's starting points and developing skills accurately. Their early and strong support of the children's different needs, especially those with SEND, advance the children's personal as well as academic learning. Early years staff liaise well with those in key stage 1 to ensure that children's needs continue to be supported effectively

to aid a smooth transition into the Years 1 and 2 classes. This collaboration is also seen in the further improvement of the teaching of phonics. This has increased the already-above-average proportion of pupils achieving expected standards in Year 1 phonics screening checks.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- Strengthen the consistency of teaching and learning across key stages 1 and 2, and increase the proportion of pupils attaining higher standards, by:
  - improving pupils' ability to spell words accurately
  - ensuring that pupils complete their written work just as carefully across the range of subjects as they do in their writing books
  - further deepening pupils' ability to reason, explain ideas and solve problems
  - developing pupils' mathematical skills across the range of subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, the chief executive officer of the Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alexander Baxter  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with school leaders, including local governors, and with the regional director of learning and achievement of the multi-academy trust. I visited classrooms with you and we collected and scrutinised samples of pupils' work in books. I talked with individual pupils during breaktimes and visits to classrooms and observed them reading and checking their work. I heard selected pupils reading and talked to them about their reading at home and school. I checked a range of documents relating to safeguarding with you and your administrative staff. We also examined details of pupils' progress and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. I took account of 66 responses to the Ofsted online Parent View survey and 27 additional written comments from parents. I also took account of 24 responses to the staff survey and 39 responses from pupils in their questionnaire. I talked informally with several parents as they brought their children to school and met separately with one parent.