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Mrs Shirley Atkar  
Headteacher  
St George's Church of England Primary School  
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Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B16 8HY

Dear Mrs Atkar

### **Short inspection of St George's Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 28 February 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 school was judged to be good in January 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Your ambitious, motivational leadership is a significant driver in getting the best from everyone in the school community. The expertise of staff and governors is used to excellent effect and pupils are able to succeed in many different ways.

Consistently strong teaching and high expectations mean that pupils do very well. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 have risen and, in 2018, nearly all Year 6 pupils reached the expected standards for their age in both English and mathematics.

You have acted on the recommendations from the previous inspection to improve teaching. You have introduced new routines for sharing information about learning with pupils and these are working well. You have also made progress in improving challenge for the most able pupils and this continues to be a school improvement priority. The school works hard to develop and maintain strong communication with parents, carers and pupils. Because of this, attendance has improved.

Parents say that they feel a part of the school and that staff are approachable and know them by name. Parents praise the quick response of staff to any concerns or incidents. They appreciate the effort made to involve many pupils in extra-curricular activities. For example, pupils' involvement in drama has led to theatre performances and parents say this has had a positive impact on their children's confidence. The school's consistent approach to homework is also a strength and enables parents to help their children learn at home.

Pupils echo these views. They are happy at school and feel safe. They report that the school's rules are fair, and that behaviour is managed well. Pupils understand what is expected of them. They respond well to their teachers, and lessons run smoothly.

The school's Christian foundation is promoted proudly and the school's motto of 'Our love of learning leads us to excellence' is exemplified through all aspects of school life.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is effective. The school's procedures and routines are fit for purpose. Training is up to date. Staff receive regular guidance and know what to do if they have a concern. They are alert to risks in the local area and keep a watch out for any warning signs that a pupil may be worried about something.

Communication between the school and other professional organisations is excellent. Consequently, staff can act quickly when necessary and can signpost families to other people who can help them.

The school teaches pupils how to stay safe. Some pupils act as friendship counsellors and help others to think and act responsibly. In addition, adults are very attentive to pupils' feelings, words and needs and always step in to help when necessary.

### **Inspection findings**

- Most children start St George's CofE Primary School with levels of knowledge and skill below those typical for their age. They make great progress. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, they are very well prepared for their next school.
- Since the previous inspection, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 have risen steadily. In 2018, standards were high, with almost all Year 6 pupils reaching the expected standards for their age. This strong attainment was the result of highly effective teaching, strong curriculum leadership, high expectations and plenty of motivational strategies. Evidence in books and in-school assessments show that current pupils are making strong progress and producing excellent work.
- A notable feature of this school is its success at ensuring that disadvantaged pupils keep up with others. In each of the past three years, there has been little difference in the standards reached by disadvantaged pupils and those of others

in the school. A key reason for this is the school's rich curriculum that offers so many different opportunities for all pupils to participate and succeed. In daily lessons and through special projects, clubs and the weekly 'Enrichment Wednesday', staff ignite pupils' interest in learning, introduce them to new ideas and give them the chance to shine. During this inspection, for example, pupils who had recently completed a poetry challenge were keen to show me what they had done. They were proud of their achievements and many had been inspired to write more at home. Their use of language and enthusiasm for the written word and learning beyond the school day were a joy to see.

- In addition to the fantastic range of things to do at school, the pupil premium is used to employ staff who can support pupils in school and at home. A pastoral manager liaises with pupils, families and support agencies in order to make sure that the right help is available when needed. Parents appreciate this and say that relationships between the community and school staff are strong.
- Funding is also used to subsidise school trips that take pupils to new places and introduce them to new activities and experiences. Pupils gain a lot from these trips, which have taken them as far afield as Cornwall, and their confidence and teamwork skills have increased as a result.
- This school is clearly very successful at teaching and motivating pupils so that they reach age-related standards. However, results at the more demanding higher standard have been more mixed. In 2018, for instance, writing soared to above average, while reading slipped below. Evidence gathered during this inspection found that reading is taught exceptionally well. The school library is well resourced and managed and pupils love books and are excited by the fun rewards that recognise their achievements. They talk knowledgeably about popular authors and staff regularly introduce them to new books and authors. Even so, making sure that the most able pupils do their very best remains a target on the school's development plan.
- Most pupils behave well. They are attentive in lessons, show respect for others and are thoughtful and considerate. Out of class, they get along well. Pupils and adults comment on the caring and orderly atmosphere in school. Nevertheless, in recent years, there have been several fixed-period exclusions from school for unacceptable behaviour. More recently, these exclusions have fallen as the school's work to reinforce expectations and support pupils has proved effective. Staff guide pupils to reflect on their behaviour and motivate them to take responsibility. Philosophy sessions, for example, give pupils time to think. Special jobs, such as leading school clubs or having a say in planning aspects of school life, instil pride and build self-esteem as pupils see the value of their suggestions, efforts and attention. Pupils who have been excluded in the past have responded very well to the school's approach. They say that it helps them to 'know what's expected' and to 'learn from their mistakes' and 'enjoy school'.
- Parents are kept very well informed and are regularly invited into school to see what is happening. Furthermore, members of the local community and church who have specific interests or skills help with activities in school. These close community links help to build trusting relationships and enrich the curriculum.
- The curriculum is evidently full of enriching experiences. In addition to daily

mathematics and English lessons, there are many different subjects that are taught with imagination and flair. Staff have excellent subject knowledge and use it well to push pupils on. Whole-school projects that link different subjects together are shaped to pupils' learning needs and communicate the school's values. Recently, pupils created a peace garden and, currently, they are working on a project driven by the theme of aspiration. Already, this is generating some impressive work. Furthermore, in response to pupils' enthusiasm for a recent reading book, staff started an animation project and pupils are working on a film that will be shared with parents at a special 'premiere event'.

- In addition, the school makes sure that pupils' success in different subjects is recognised. Formal qualifications in subjects such as drama are used to let pupils know how well they have done. In music, the chance to put on public performances in professional venues leaves a lasting, and very positive, impression on pupils.
- Pupils get a great education at this school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to support the most able pupils to reach the highest possible standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Diane Pye  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and members of your staff team. I also met with seven governors, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust (MAT) and the head of school improvement. I carried out short observations of teaching and looked at pupils' work in books and on display. I talked with pupils in lessons and at lunchtime. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.

By the end of the inspection, there were 13 recent responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 11 free-text responses. I took account of these and considered the 23 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire and the 16 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

I looked at several documents, including the school's own evaluation of its performance, improvement plans, attendance information, training records, information about the work of the governors and the MAT, and several school policy documents and internal analysis of different aspects of the school's work. I also checked the school's website and the procedures for keeping pupils safe. I asked the staff, pupils and parents about safeguarding matters.