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Mr Jim Kreiselmeier
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Dear Mr Kreiselmeier

Short inspection of Christ Church Cep Academy, Folkestone

Following my visit to the school on 26 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 the school was judged to be good in October 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.

Since the previous inspection, the school has gone from strength to strength. This happy and ambitious school has high expectations of all its pupils. Leaders recognise that the quality of education they provide is crucial to pupils' success in the future. Consequently, leaders and staff have set about providing a consistently high standard of learning across the whole curriculum. The school's motto, 'striving to be the best version of ourselves every day' reflects the school's culture of continuous improvement. Initiatives are well considered and rooted in the needs of the children at your school. These are as wide-ranging as designing a peace garden, working on daily 'grapple' mathematics problems, to camping out overnight. Leaders ensure that pupils are given a wealth of opportunities that are designed to expand their horizons.

Your patient and compassionate leadership has fostered the skills and talents of your staff. Staff morale is high, and staff work seamlessly as a team, all united in their work to help pupils thrive.

Pupils are happy and successful. Through staff members' diligence and creativity, pupils meet and often exceed the high expectations of their teachers. Pupils say that teachers 'help to mould us into the person we can be'. They are self-assured, thoughtful and get on well together, relishing the regular challenges that stretch their learning and thinking. They enjoy opportunities to be part of school life, for instance leading worship time and taking on responsibilities.

Parents and carers appreciate your strong leadership as well as the care and support their children receive from all staff. Parents overwhelmingly say that their children are flourishing. Typical comments included, 'Christ Church has exceptional leadership and teaching,' and 'The school has gone beyond expectations to ensure children's learning and well-being is catered for.'

Leaders are making strenuous efforts to ensure that absence rates are further reduced. It is proving very difficult to make further impact on the rates of attendance, which are still just below the national average. However, leaders continue to work closely with families to encourage better attendance. It is worth noting that leaders have been able to achieve excellent outcomes for even the most vulnerable pupils despite challenges with attendance. While fixed-term exclusions were high during the year 2016/17, these have now returned to very low levels. You have explained in detail that the spike was due to specific situations that are now resolved. Pupils' conduct observed during the inspection was exemplary, with pupils showing impressive levels of maturity.

At the last inspection, you were asked to ensure that teachers adapt activities in mathematics so that all pupils, especially the most able, are given work which makes them think hard and make the best possible progress. Pupils' progress and achievement in mathematics are impressive because of the high-quality teaching they receive. This is reflected in the books of current pupils and in the results of national assessments at the end of key stages 1 and 2. For the last three years, pupils have attained highly in mathematics at the expected and the higher standards.

You were also asked to make sure that subject leaders use information about pupils' progress rigorously to secure further improvements in the quality of teaching. Subject and team leaders have a good understanding of their roles and are highly effective in their work. They hold teachers to account for the progress of pupils in their class and ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently high in all subjects. They monitor and track the progress of pupils carefully, implementing appropriate interventions to ensure that no pupil falls behind.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff work in unison in their commitment to keep pupils safe. Policies and procedures are in place to support staff, being clear about how to conduct themselves as well as how to respond to any safeguarding concern. Staff act on these concerns speedily and effectively. Leaders ensure that detailed risk

assessments are in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe and their individual needs are met.

School leaders and governors are aware of areas that they would like to improve, particularly in terms of record-keeping. In addition, arrangements are in place to ensure that new governors who have recently joined the governing body will be suitably trained as quickly as possible.

Pupils speak with assurance about how they are taught to keep themselves safe online. They refer to the special inputs they have received about cyber bullying as well as the time given with their teachers to reflect on matters that cause them any worry or anxiety. Bullying is extremely rare. One pupil described the culture of the school as 'encouraging and nurturing', which fully exemplifies the safeguarding atmosphere within the school.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including: how well leaders make use of assessment information to raise the quality of learning, particularly for disadvantaged pupils; the quality of the teaching of mathematics and English, particularly for the most able pupils; how well governors discharge their duties; and whether the curriculum is suitably broad and balanced.
- Teachers know their pupils well. They assess pupils' work regularly and accurately. Teachers skilfully use this knowledge of what pupils can do to plan lessons that match the needs of pupils well. Leaders and teachers have firm aspirations for the high number of disadvantaged pupils and work relentlessly to ensure that barriers to their learning are alleviated wherever possible. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' confidence, self-belief and aspiration are high and they make strong progress.
- The teaching of mathematics and English across the school is of a high quality. Leaders are determined that every pupil should be able to read. Over the last three years, despite the significant number of pupils at the school who speak English as an additional language, the proportion of pupils who achieved the phonics check at the end of Year 1 is high and above national figures. The school's 'reading challenge' has, over time, been very successful and pupils read widely and often. As a result of pupils' interest in and love of reading, their writing is of a high quality. Pupils apply their newly learned vocabulary and understanding of grammar to the many opportunities they are given to write. In mathematics, teachers skilfully guide pupils to apply their secure arithmetic skills to reasoning and problem-solving. Teachers provide the most able pupils with appropriate challenge to enable them to make the best possible progress. Consequently, all groups of pupils achieve highly in these subjects.
- Governors have given sterling service to the school. Several have been governors for many years and have helped lead the school to its current success. However, recently a few experienced governors have stepped down. The governing body is therefore in a period of transition. The chair and his deputy are aware that there

have been some gaps in the oversight that they have kept of the school's work because of this upheaval. Further work to ensure that new governors have the knowledge to confidently execute their statutory roles is now a priority for the school.

- The school's curriculum is exciting. Since the last inspection, you have introduced major overhauls to the curriculum which have brought about tangible improvements to pupils' learning and their personal development. Pupils' learning in the classroom is enhanced by valuable trips. Pupils take part in sporting competitions with great success and enjoy learning a musical instrument which they play in a brass band. Aspirational projects, such as working with a firm of architects to design a building locally, enable pupils to better understand possible future careers. Leaders are rightly proud of the breadth of experiential learning across the school and its value for pupils. Nonetheless, you have ambitious plans to deepen pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding further in a wide range of subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- record-keeping is maintained at the highest possible standard to ensure that work to keep pupils safe can be improved even further
- they improve the skill set of governors who are new to the governing body, so they can discharge their statutory duties confidently
- they continue the thoughtful work already under way to deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding further across the wider curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Frances Nation
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held meetings with you, senior leaders and five governors, including the chair and the vice-chair of the governing body. I visited classes in all year groups with you and the deputy headteachers. I met with a group of pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 to hear their views of the school and talk about their work. Alongside school leaders, I scrutinised a wide range of work in pupils' books. I considered 40 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 24 free-text comments. I also spoke directly to some parents at the start of the school day. I considered 48

responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire, took into account three letters from members of staff and met with a teacher at their request. I analysed a range of documentation, including information about safeguarding, the work of the governors and your evaluation of the school's effectiveness.