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Mr Simon Way
Interim Executive Headteacher
St Peter's Methodist Primary School
St Peter's Grove
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Dear Mr Way

Short inspection of St Peter's Methodist Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 December 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

You were appointed as the executive headteacher for an initial interim one-year period in September of this year. You split your time equally between St Peter's and the school where you are the substantive headteacher. Together with governors, you have reviewed the school's processes and procedures and made some changes. There is a new leadership structure and you work closely alongside the head of school.

Because of your effective monitoring programme, senior leaders and governors know exactly what is working well and what could be better. You have successfully maintained the strength in teaching and learning reported in the previous inspection and ensure that pupils continue to achieve well. You have quickly built positive relationships with the staff. They, as well as governors, share your commitment, determination and ambition to forge further improvements. There is strong teamwork across the school, and staff morale is high. Parents report that they feel the school is 'improving under the new team' and that 'the atmosphere is better at the school now'.

The ethos of the school promotes a very strong inclusive culture that values and respects diversity in all its forms. Pupils learn and play without fear of prejudice of any kind. A parent wrote, 'We love the opportunities that a diverse school in the heart of Canterbury can bring for children.' The vibrant curriculum is broad,

balanced and enriched in many ways. Particularly good use is made of the fact that the school is in the centre of Canterbury. Appropriate attention is given to the development of mathematical and English skills, but not at the expense of all the other curriculum subjects. On occasion, the planned activities do not draw on pupils' excellent personal skills, attitudes and behaviour. As a result, they do not always have enough opportunities to be resourceful learners or use their initiative.

Pupils are great ambassadors for their school. They speak with lively enthusiasm about all that they do. They enjoy school, behave extremely well and have very positive attitudes to learning. A group of pupils agreed with one who said, 'Teachers always help us, we're never afraid to ask if we're stuck and they make sure we understand.' Pupils are polite, articulate and friendly. They are very positive about the strong friendships they make at school. When asked, they were hard-pressed to think of anything about the school that they would change. They are respectful and caring of each other and adults. There are very strong, positive relationships between pupils and teachers.

Parents are generally positive about the school. One parent wrote: 'The staff at St Peter's are super caring and creative in what they do with the children. My children very much enjoy their classes, their teachers and their place in the school community.' Many parents said that they were pleased with how accessible you and other staff are. They like the fact that you and others are in the playground to welcome them and their children to school. Parents particularly appreciate the family feel of the school and how well all the staff know their children.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve the progress of the most able pupils. You have correctly identified that continuing to provide all pupils with appropriate levels of challenge remains a priority, in order to ensure that their progress is reflected in their attainment. Leaders and all staff are very well informed and aware of the information gathered throughout the year about the progress that pupils are making.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and thorough. All staff and governors receive regular training and updates in all aspects of safeguarding. Policies and procedures are clear and understood well by staff. Staff know the pupils very well and this, along with their training, enables them to be vigilant in identifying and reporting any concerns. There is effective and appropriate liaison with other agencies. Pupils who may be vulnerable, and their families, receive timely and effective support. All of the required checks are made on the suitability of adults to work in the school. These are recorded carefully and efficiently on the single central register.

Pupils said that they feel safe and secure in school and are well looked after. They are confident to talk to adults in school if they have any problems. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Almost all of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and all of

those that I spoke with, felt that their children were safe, happy and well looked after in school. You work hard with pupils and their families to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. Overall, attendance is above the national figure. You have reduced the proportion of pupils with poor attendance. You are vigilant in tracking attendance for individuals and follow up all unexplained absences.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection we agreed to focus on the following aspects of the school's work: pupils' achievement in mathematics; the progress of different groups; the effectiveness of the work of leaders; and the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve mathematics, especially in key stage 2. In 2017, pupils' progress in mathematics was not as strong as their progress in reading and writing. Too few pupils attained the expected standard for their age in mathematics by the end of Year 6. Senior leaders explored the reasons for this and took appropriate action. As a result, achievement in mathematics is improving. Progress and attainment improved by the end of key stage 2 in 2018. However, some further improvement is still needed to match outcomes in reading and writing. Current pupils are making good progress. They are increasingly developing skills of mathematical reasoning and a greater depth of understanding.
- Leaders have regular meetings with class teachers to check on pupils' progress. These enable you to identify and provide timely additional support where needed. You have a clear overview of the progress of different groups of pupils across the school, including those who speak English as an additional language, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). You are rightly cautious when interpreting published information on pupils' achievement, as the groups of SEND and disadvantaged pupils are relatively small and also vary from year to year. In addition, you have many pupils who start or leave the school at different times of the year, which can skew the information for progress over time.
- Over half of the pupils in the school speak English as an additional language. These pupils are welcomed and receive very effective and proficient support as soon as they join the school, especially those who start with no, or very few, English language skills. Skilful teaching and support from teaching assistants ensure that pupils' learning progresses quickly. By the end of key stage 2, this group of pupils achieves particularly well. Across the school, expectations for what pupils can achieve are not always as high as they could be, given the pupils' abilities and attitudes. Teachers do plan challenging work for pupils but this challenge is not always as effective and demanding in all classes as seen in some.
- You and governors set great store in developing leaders and ensuring the capacity for further improvement. Leaders at all levels in your new leadership structure have clear plans for their work. They know the strengths and priorities for further improvement in their particular areas and undertake monitoring activities. Leaders are influential, providing training and support for their

colleagues. There is no complacency, however, and you are aware that you have yet to see the full impact of leaders' work on improving outcomes and the quality of teaching and learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there are increased opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to be resourceful learners and use their initiative
- all teachers have the highest expectations for pupils' achievement and challenge pupils appropriately.

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

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the head of school. I also met with other leaders in the school. I had a meeting with members of the governing body and a telephone conversation with the local authority adviser. You and the head of school accompanied me on visits to classes. During these visits, I spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at their work. I spoke to pupils around the school and in the playground, asking them for their views on the school.

I reviewed the school's website and sampled a range of documents and records, including your evaluation of the school's effectiveness, information about pupils' achievement, and documents relating to safeguarding. I took into account 34 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 21 free-text responses. I also spoke with some parents at the start of the school day.