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23 May 2012

Mr A Leivers
Executive Headteacher
Holy Trinity CofE Primary School
Trinity Road South
West Bromwich
B70 6NF

Dear Mr Leivers

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Holy Trinity CofE Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 22 May 2012 and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and the representative from the local authority who found time to come and talk to me at short notice.

Since the last inspection, the headteacher has resigned and an executive headteacher, also the head of a successful local school, appointed. The two schools were formally federated in March 2012 with the support of the local authority. Each school now has a head of school who manages its day-to-day running. Seven members of staff have left or intend to leave Holy Trinity at the end of the summer term and seven new staff have been appointed, including a deputy headteacher; some to take up post in September 2012. Many pupils leave and join the school at times other than the start of term. Since the last inspection, 29 pupils have left the school and 18 have arrived, mainly from Asian and Eastern European migrant families. As part of this visit, the procedures for safeguarding children were checked and found to meet requirements.

As a result of the inspection on 10 October 2011, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Children start the nursery with attainment well below that expected for their age, especially is communication, language and literacy. Around two thirds of the children

come from families where English is not their first language. Unreliable teacher assessment and tracking of pupil progress in the past has hampered accurate assessments in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Much work has been done in a short space of time to moderate judgements and use assessment effectively to plan appropriate work for all pupils. All teachers now make much more accurate judgements to measure and track pupil attainment. However, literacy throughout the school, especially writing, remains a lower attaining subject than numeracy. Pupils leave Year 6 with lower attainment in English than in mathematics. This has been partly due to a history of weak leadership of English, although this is now improving. Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs make slightly better progress than their peers due to the support they receive from teaching assistants. White British pupils attain higher standards than Asian pupils in Key Stage 1 but this pattern is reversed in Key Stage 2. Results in the 2011 national tests indicate that attainment in Year 6 and the progress that pupils made from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 met the government floor targets, which are the minimum standards expected for attainment and progress. Current data indicates that while attainment is still below the national average, all classes are slowly beginning to close the gap. Progress is beginning to accelerate. Year 6 data this year suggests that pupils will attain the national average in mathematics, including an increased proportion at the higher level.

Attendance, reported as satisfactory at the last inspection, has declined slightly, taking account of the full reporting year, mainly due to the larger than average number of persistent absentees and parents who continue to take their children on holiday in term time despite the advice of the school.

The quality of teaching has improved. The executive headteacher and senior staff judged that very little teaching was good in January 2012 and 57% was judged good in May 2012. As part of this monitoring visit, all staff were jointly observed teaching by HMI and members of the senior management team and 38% of teaching was judged good. Improvement in the quality of teaching has been due to staff training, the support provided for individual teachers and also due to new staff joining the school. Current staff work very hard and feel much more valued and supported to improve teaching quality. Teaching assistants are given more opportunities to get involved in training and also feel more valued, engaged and motivated.

In the lessons observed, teachers' plans now take more account of pupils' individual needs. Staff assess pupils' work more frequently and accurately. Learning objectives in plans are clearer, although some are still too broad to allow for the measurement of learning outcomes. In the best lessons, all pupils are focused and engaged. Teaching assistants are targeted to support or extend individual pupils. It is clear that all pupils know what they are learning and make better progress. In the less successful lessons, the reverse is true and pupils do not learn enough. The teacher talks too much and there are missed opportunities for pupils to learn effectively.

Pupil assessments are made every half term and used by teachers to measure progress and plan subsequent learning. They are used by senior staff to stimulate discussion at pupil progress meetings. Those pupils who are identified as making slower progress are targeted for specific intervention programmes, such as additional phonics in Years 4 and 5 and booster sessions for Year 6 pupils who have the potential to attain higher levels in tests. All Key Stage 1 pupils now routinely have spellings to learn at home, and phonics sessions have become a regular feature of lesson delivery. Intervention programmes are beginning to have an impact on accelerating pupils' progress. Senior staff regularly monitor teaching and learning, work in pupils' books and teachers' planning. Mathematics and English subject leaders ensure that assessment information is used accurately and that individual teachers are well-supported to develop cross-curricular links.

Staff have received some valuable training to ensure they consider ways of developing numeracy skills, especially calculation across the curriculum. This has been particularly effective in science, where pupils learn much more about how mathematics is used to handle data, make hypotheses and to help them evaluate the impact of experiments. The focus on multiplication times-tables is also helping pupils to be more confident in using calculation facts to work out problems.

The support to further develop literacy skills across the curriculum has had more focus than mathematics. The regular spelling tests are making sure that pupils learn new words and correct them when they make mistakes. They are more confident about when to use correct punctuation and feel that their handwriting skills have improved as teachers have higher expectations of the presentation of work. Word walls are now evident in all classrooms, although they are not consistently referred to. Teachers are now more rigorous in their marking and have raised their expectations of the quality and quantity of work that pupils can produce. Pupils appreciate when teachers' marking provides suggestions to help them improve their next piece of work.

The placement of the executive headteacher from another successful school by the local authority, the federating of the two schools and the appointment of heads of school in both, has created fresh impetus and an enthusiasm to drive and embed improvements at a quicker pace. The executive headteacher has successfully pulled staff together quickly with a renewed ambition not to accept mediocrity but to determinedly improve the life chances of children in the school. Staff morale is high. The support and training provided by other staff at the partner school and by the local authority has been targeted and of high quality. School action plans are detailed, regularly reviewed and evaluated at regular task group meetings. However, some of the success criteria in action planning lacks sufficient quantifiable data for the governing body to hold the school to account. However, the school is clearly able to provide evidence of improvement in staff morale, leadership ambition and an acceleration of pupil progress since the last inspection. The local authority statement of action and action plan are now fit for purpose. Parents and carers have been

informed about the intended actions of the local authority who have provided opportunities to take account of their views.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clive Kempton HMI
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2011

- Accelerate pupils' progress in English and mathematics by achieving more consistently good teaching across the school. Within this:
 - ensure teachers' planning, and the activities arising from it, always meet pupils' differing learning needs
 - improve the curriculum so that it gives teachers better guidance on how to promote literacy and numeracy skills at every opportunity
 - establish greater accuracy in analysing and using assessment information to move learning on faster for all groups of pupils.

- Improve pupils' calculation skills, give pupils more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving activities, and relate mathematical learning more to everyday life.

- Ensure literacy skills are consolidated and extended in different subjects in all classes, and improve pupils' spelling, punctuation and handwriting skills.