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27 July 2016

Mrs Sarah Thornton  
Headteacher  
Shibden Head Primary Academy  
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Dear Mrs Thornton

### **Short inspection of Shibden Head Primary Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 6 July 2016, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in June 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education provided by the school since the last inspection. Your inspirational leadership motivates staff and ensures that the school keeps on improving. You are ably supported by the deputy headteacher, leaders at all levels and governors; all share your high expectations and ambition for the school and its pupils. The enthusiastic approach of all staff, in seeking ways to improve and share good practice, is a key factor in the school's success. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the harmonious atmosphere through their positive behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. Everyone works together to achieve the school's aim: 'to give children the academic and life skills they need for a happy and successful future'.

You have successfully dealt with the areas for improvement that were identified at the inspection of your predecessor school. High-quality professional development has ensured that teaching maintains good outcomes for pupils in all subjects. There is an effective approach to marking; the verbal feedback and written comments help pupils to understand new learning and improve their work. The curriculum has been reviewed to give pupils lots of opportunities to develop their writing in different subjects. Teachers constantly seek ways to make learning fun while ensuring the demands of the new national curriculum are met.

Pupils make good progress right from the start and some make more rapid progress. Children enter the Reception Year with varied experiences and the

knowledge and skills that are mostly typical for children of their age. By the end of the Reception Year an above average proportion achieve a good level of development, so they are well prepared for their move to Year 1.

Pupils' attainment in the statutory assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has been above average for a number of years. The latest results show that attainment is above the national average for 2016 in reading, writing, mathematics and the grammar, punctuation and spelling tests at key stage 2. At key stage 1 there are no national comparisons available at the time of writing this letter. However, results that have been moderated by the local authority show the majority of pupils are working securely at the standards expected for their age. Phonics skills (the sounds that letters make) are taught systematically and pupils typically achieve above average standards in the Year 1 phonics screening.

Your incisive approach to self-evaluation provides a firm foundation on which to secure further improvements. School improvement planning rightly prioritises closing the gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in school. Training on grammar is planned for teachers, in order to help them improve the writing of all pupils further. There is also more that could be done to develop pupils' ability to reason mathematically and deepen pupils' understanding of mathematical relationships.

The majority of parents who spoke with me and those who responded to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, are positive about their children's experiences in school. Comments referred to staff being, 'approachable, responsive and supportive' and to the 'range of opportunities children have to try new things and grow as individuals'. A very small minority of parents are not as happy with the school, particularly with regard to the quality of teaching and appropriateness of homework.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. All staff know what to do if they have concerns for a pupil's safety and welfare and how to keep children safe in school. Staff and governors have completed training, including on the 'Prevent' duty which details how to keep children safe from the risks of extremism. Recruitment checks are thorough. Records relating to behaviour and safeguarding are detailed and any concerns are followed up rigorously. The school works constructively with other agencies and parents.

Pupils are taught, in detail, about how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet, on roads and from bullying. Pupils feel and are safe in school. They have an excellent understanding of different types of bullying and its harmful effects. Bullying in school is extremely rare and pupils are confident that teachers will deal appropriately with any concerns they might have. Leaders engage with parents effectively to safeguard children. The vast majority of parents who made their views known said that their children feel safe and are well looked after. A very small number feel that behaviour is not always managed well, but this was not

evident in the school records or during the inspection.

## **Inspection findings**

- Senior leaders provide highly effective leadership to maintain the good quality of education. You have made sure the school stays abreast of national changes, for example to the curriculum and assessment. The outstanding aspects that were highlighted in the inspection of the predecessor school have been sustained, including pupils' behaviour and safety and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Governors provide very effective support and challenge to school leaders. They know the school's strengths and priorities for further improvement because they receive reflective reports from leaders and have a good understanding of data. They visit the school regularly and ask searching questions. They keep their own knowledge up to date by attending training and sharing best practice through the academy trust's forums.
- Leaders at all levels make a good contribution to school improvement. Leadership responsibilities are delegated effectively to make the best use of knowledge and expertise. Therefore leaders are able to use their initiative and support staff development successfully.
- Teachers' performance is managed effectively and supported by good quality, wide-ranging professional development. Staff attend external training and are also keen to learn from each other. Newly qualified teachers are supported extremely well and make a valuable contribution to the school.
- Teaching has a good impact on pupils' achievement over time. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide pupils with many exciting experiences and motivating activities. Teaching assistants provide good support in classes and in small groups. Pupils' communication and reading skills are developed particularly well in all subjects.
- Pupils have plentiful opportunities to write in different subjects and develop a good understanding of the features of different types of writing. Their writing is generally of high quality. However, they are not consistently supported to apply their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary to the best effect when writing in different contexts.
- Pupils also apply their mathematical skills in many subjects, particularly in science and when designing their own enterprise projects. However, pupils' mathematical reasoning skills, including opportunities to follow a line of enquiry or investigate mathematical relationships, are not developed as fully as other aspects of mathematics. This applies to pupils of all abilities, including the most able.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is accurate and informs their planning for subsequent lessons well. Teachers have a detailed knowledge of the new national curriculum and check their assessments with other schools in the academy trust and locally.
- Good-quality curriculum planning makes sure pupils develop knowledge and skills in all subjects. Pupils are especially enthused by the half-termly topics,

which focus on different subjects and encourage them to make links in their learning. Pupils learn to apply their skills, carry out investigations and conduct their own research successfully. Their learning is enriched with visits and after-school clubs.

- Additional sports funding is used well to broaden pupils' participation and improve teachers' skills in teaching physical education. Pupils particularly enjoy the cross-country races and inter-school tournaments.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of British values are promoted exceptionally well through various topics and reinforced through the ethos of the school. Pupils have an in-depth understanding of different faiths and cultures. They develop excellent social skills and discuss moral dilemmas and global issues with maturity and insight.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start. Information from the various pre-school settings is used effectively to enable children to build on their prior learning. They are provided with stimulating activities in a safe and nurturing setting, and as a result they grow in confidence and thoroughly enjoy learning. The outdoor area has been developed so it reflects the quality of the indoor classroom and extends children's learning in all areas.
- The consistently good teaching and well-planned curriculum supports all groups of pupils to make at least expected progress across key stage 1 and key stage 2. Some pupils make better than expected progress, although this rapid learning is not yet consistent for all groups. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well so they make just as good progress as other pupils.
- The pupil premium is used to enhance the experiences of disadvantaged pupils and they benefit from enrichment activities and support that develop their personal skills very effectively. However, disadvantaged pupils still do not consistently achieve as well as other pupils in school and their attendance is also not as high. Governors are aware there is more work to do to make sure disadvantaged pupils attain as well as others and are reviewing their approaches and looking at what other schools do.
- The most able pupils typically achieve standards that are securely within or above those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. They make at least expected progress and many make better than expected progress from their starting points. A few parents, however, feel that the most able pupils are not consistently provided with challenging work in all year groups. There are times when they could be given more challenging work in using mathematical reasoning.
- The vast majority of pupils display excellent behaviour and those who struggle are provided with good support to help them manage their behaviour. Pupils are productive, present their work neatly and show pride in their achievements. They say they love coming to school and they make an excellent contribution to the school, for example as 'junior leaders' and through their positive attitudes and relationships with each other. Attendance is above average overall and there have been no exclusions in the last three years.

- Partnership working is highly effective. The academy trust provides 'light touch' consultancy and adviser support and facilitates the sharing of best practice through subject and themed networks. Teachers find these useful and participate enthusiastically. You are keen to extend your expertise beyond the school and have provided support to schools within the trust. You have also drawn on external support from the local authority and participate in local clusters to share best practice more widely.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- support for disadvantaged pupils is effective in raising their achievement and improving their attendance so that gaps between their attendance and achievement and other pupils in school narrow
- teachers help pupils to apply their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary to the best effect when writing in different contexts
- pupils' ability to reason mathematically and their understanding of mathematical relationships are developed further, especially for the most able pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Jean Olsson-Law  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I had meetings with you and the deputy headteacher, senior and middle leaders, five governors and two representatives from Focus-Trust. I visited seven classes with you, where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils. I met with six pupils from key stage 2 and spoke to others during lessons. I spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school and took account of 27 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire. I took account of 31 responses to the online questionnaire from staff. I looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment and at your self-evaluation and action planning. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe and records of training, safeguarding checks and behaviour management.