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Mr Chris Wightman
Headteacher
Todmorden Church of England Junior, Infant & Nursery School
Burnley Road
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Dear Mr Chris Wightman

Short inspection of Todmorden Church of England Junior, Infant & Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 8 November 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 the school was judged to be good in September 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You and the governing body have worked effectively to ensure that the school is well placed to respond positively to changes in the educational landscape and, more importantly, to the needs of the community. For example, you have established a nursery on the school site, which caters for children from two years old. You have also acted decisively and well to address areas of your school's work that need to improve. You have recently reshaped your senior team so that there is an even greater focus on monitoring the progress that pupils make. The information that you gather from this monitoring is ensuring that teaching is carefully targeted to suit the needs of your children and pupils. The assistant headteacher leads this aspect of the school's work well.

You work effectively to engage with the wider community and, particularly, parents and families. The overwhelming majority of the parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, were positive about the school and would recommend it. Those parents with whom I spoke during the inspection were very supportive and enthusiastic about the way the school cares for and challenges their children. They particularly welcomed the daily opportunities they have to visit the school and see their children at work. This is a real strength of your school.

You and your governing body are very clear and realistic about what your school needs to do to improve. Your assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses

is accurate. This is because you and governors are rigorous in your regular monitoring of all aspects of the school's work. You visit classrooms regularly. You also actively encourage all members of staff to develop their skills and take responsibility for the roles they play in ensuring all children do the best they can. For example, your team of teaching assistants plays a full role in planning pupils' learning and assessing its impact. It also plays a full part in the school-wide appraisal process and has full access to training opportunities. Your teaching assistants told me that they welcomed this and the opportunities you offer them to take on further responsibilities.

Governors know the school well and are well led. You give them regular updates on the work and progress of the school through detailed reporting. Governors supplement this with regular, themed, 'learning walks' and regular contacts with parents through, for example, the regular Friday coffee morning which some governors regularly attend. As a result of this detailed and appropriate knowledge and contact, governors are well placed to hold you and your senior team to account for the continued progress of the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a culture of safeguarding at the school. You, your staff and governing body take these safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. There is regular and effective training for all staff and governors to ensure that they are up to date in their knowledge and understanding. Your links with outside agencies are good. Your records of engagement with these agencies are detailed and show your careful and rigorous approach to this aspect of the school's work. You make referrals to the local authority promptly and follow them through effectively.

You and your leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy school and there is a growing culture of independent learning. Pupils respond very positively to the more open-ended problems they encounter in, for example, mathematics. Pupils also have more opportunities to use computers to support their learning. They have access to hand-held devices in their classrooms. You have also set up a computer room in the school since the last inspection. Pupils, including the most able pupils, report that they enjoy using information technology as it helps them in their learning and understanding.
- The school's own assessment information and evidence gathered during the inspection show that children are average or slightly below when they arrive in the Reception class. They make good and better progress during their Reception Year and are well prepared for school. The number of children reaching a good level of development is greater than that seen nationally. They make good progress through key stage 1. Phonics screening check scores at the end of Year 1 are strong.

- Pupils make generally good progress during key stage 2. Reading and mathematics outcomes are stronger than those for writing. You are very aware of this. You have put in place a range of strategies to ensure that writing outcomes, especially those of boys, are more closely in line with those of reading and mathematics. You have, for example, very recently introduced a school-wide approach to handwriting using a cursive script. Although only in place from the start of this term, this is already having a positive impact on both presentation and the speed at which pupils write.
- There are very few differences between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and others at your school. This is because you work diligently to identify barriers to learning for these pupils and have put in place precise and effective interventions to ensure that they make rapid progress. You use the pupil premium grant funding well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. This is because additional support is well targeted and its impact carefully measured. The provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well led.
- The work in pupils' books and folders is generally well presented. Staff mark pupils' books carefully following the school's marking and assessment policy. Pupils are increasingly confident in the use of their green 'editing' pens to improve their work and they generally respond well to teachers' comments. Most-able pupils particularly benefit from the opportunities this gives them to reflect on and improve their writing. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are growing in their awareness of how to manipulate their writing to have a particular impact on their reader. This growing confidence in writing, especially in key stage 2, is being effectively supported by the way teachers link pupils' own writing with the class reader.
- You place a strong emphasis on reading. Pupils have regular opportunities to read in school and are encouraged to read to family members at home. Those pupils who need to catch up with their reading are given additional, targeted, support. The most-able readers report that they are encouraged to expand and deepen their reading by staff, who help them select appropriately challenging books from the library. There is regular contact between home and school about reading through each pupil's reading record.
- The children are happy at school. When I asked a group of Year 4 pupils whether they enjoyed school, they appeared surprised by my question. 'We love it!' a number of them said. Other pupils I spoke with had similar positive opinions about the school. They also reported that they felt safe and that they knew how to keep safe, including when online. They knew about the various forms that bullying can take and that if an incident of bullying were to happen at the school, they knew what to do and were confident that adults would deal with it effectively.
- You have created a strong ethos of cooperation and mutual respect at the school. Pupils behave well and are aware of the needs of others. They are friendly and polite. Collective worship is of high quality and pupils participate with enthusiasm. The pupils' Worship Committee monitors the quality and impact of collective worship and reports its findings to the senior leadership team and to governors.
- I saw no examples of low-level disruption during the inspection visit. Pupils

reported, and school records show, that poor behaviour is rare. When it does occur, it is followed up carefully and effectively. Parents are fully involved.

- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is consistently above the national average.
- You are involved, on behalf of the local authority, as a leader of the local cluster of Todmorden schools. The school benefits from this involvement by working together with the group of schools to check standards and share training and expertise. This engagement with schools beyond your own helps ensure that you and your staff keep up to date and alert to the needs of the wider community.
- The local authority's work with the school is 'light touch' but effective. It provides support for governance and for the work of the Todmorden cluster. It also brokers funding for particular projects such as providing training opportunities for teaching assistants.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to improve the quality of the teaching of writing, especially that of boys and particularly in key stage 2, so that outcomes in writing are in line with those of reading and mathematics
- they continue to focus the quality of teachers' feedback to pupils, in line with the school's policy, so that the pupils know more precisely what they need to do to improve their work.

I am copying this letter to the chair of governors, the director of education for the Anglican Diocese of Leeds, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Calderdale. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Evans
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you and other members of the senior team, including the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, and with other members of staff. I met with six Year 4 pupils to talk about their experience of school and awareness of safety. I listened to pupils read. I visited all classrooms and spoke with pupils about their work; I also looked at a range of pupils' books. You accompanied me on most of these visits and we discussed the quality and impact of teaching. I also met with a group of governors, including the chair of governors. I scrutinised documents, including: minutes of governors' meetings; information about pupils' progress; details of attendance; and information about safeguarding. I spoke with groups of parents at the start of the school day. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at playtime.

The agreed key lines of enquiry

- Have leaders improved pupils' skills in learning independently and extended opportunities for them to evaluate their own work, promoting more independent investigation?
- What have leaders done to address the differences between pupils' performance in reading and mathematics and their weaker performance in writing?
- How well have leaders improved pupils attendance, especially that of disadvantaged pupils and have governors effectively monitored and challenged this aspect of the school's work?
- Are safeguarding arrangements strong and effective so that pupils feel and know how to be safe? Is behaviour around school and in lessons good?