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Andrew Clowes  
Headteacher  
Hey-with-Zion Primary School  
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Dear Mr Clowes

### **Short inspection of Hey-with-Zion Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 18 July 2017, 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 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As the recently appointed headteacher of Hey-with-Zion, you have made an important impact and ensured that the school continues to go from strength to strength.

You have created an environment that fosters the care and nurture of the whole school community, driven successfully by your Christian values. You truly live up to your school motto, 'Within the love of God, we strive to do the best we can for ourselves and others.' You are ably assisted by your deputy headteacher and your enthusiastic staff team. Together you ensure that you put pupils at the heart of all that you do. As a result, they flourish, both academically and in their personal development.

The very large majority of parents who spoke with me, or responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, are extremely positive about the school and would recommend it to others without hesitation. Many parents said that their children 'love school because it is a great place to be' and that staff are 'approachable and caring'. Parents also felt the progress that their children make in their learning is 'impressive' and a real strength.

All staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire are proud to be part of Hey-with-Zion and feel that the school is well led and managed. Staff share your

vision and aspirations and there is a strong sense of the staff team working to achieve the very best for pupils.

Children benefit from a very strong start during early years, with most achieving a good level of development. At the end of key stages 1 and 2, the very large majority of pupils reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving greater depth and higher standards is above or comparable to national averages. However, you are not complacent and are determined that the exceptional achievement in mathematics is also repeated in reading and writing. To this end, the actions you have already put in place are leading to further improvements, particularly in writing, and are evident in the work in pupils' books. Current assessment information suggests that a number of pupils will reach these higher levels by the end of this academic year. However, I agree with you that there is still more work that can be done to ensure sustainability, particularly in English.

At the previous inspection, inspectors identified a need to continue to raise the quality of teaching in key stage 1, in order to raise expectations of pupils' achievement. Leaders have successfully ensured that a number of improvements have taken place. Pupils benefit from interesting and stimulating tasks and activities, many of which provide the opportunity for them to use physical resources to help them think through their learning and get involved in their lessons. Teachers show a good level of subject knowledge and give clear explanations. For example, in Year 1, pupils were engrossed in a lesson challenging them to create three-dimensional shapes out of matchsticks and modelling clay. Adults allowed pupils to solve the mathematical problems they faced and expertly supported learning by asking just the right questions to support pupils' understanding and draw out their learning. As a result of these improvements to teaching, outcomes at the end of key stage 1 are now strong, both at expected standard and at greater depth.

You rightly pride yourselves in offering pupils a good-quality curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics. Curriculum leaders are enthusiastic about their subject, are knowledgeable and hard-working. Each curriculum subject is assessed to ensure that pupils make progress across the whole curriculum. This information is also used effectively by curriculum leaders to identify opportunities for staff training. You have achieved, or are working towards, a number of curriculum awards or quality marks. These have contributed to you setting high standards in a number of subjects, such as science, history and physical education. Pupils say how much they enjoy their learning in wider curriculum subjects, and they respond well to the ways you make learning lively and engaging for them. Every opportunity is offered to pupils to practise mathematics and English skills across the curriculum, particularly in giving pupils a purpose for writing. You recognise that some subjects are not as developed to the same high standard as the best and you are still exploring ways to ensure that pupils have a balanced experience of subjects across the year.

Attendance is a high priority for the school and has improved over the last few years. It is now comparable to the national average. You have good-quality systems

for monitoring attendance and punctuality, and have wisely focused the work of your learning mentor on improving attendance further and reducing the number of pupils who are regularly absent. Her work, and the emphasis you and your staff place on the importance of attending school, is having a beneficial impact. You have had some notable successes, halving the number of pupils being persistently absent over a three-year period. You are right to identify that there is still more work to be done as there are still too many pupils who are persistently absent.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your team have ensured that pupils have a safe and secure environment by promoting the clear message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding records are kept rigorously, are detailed and are reviewed regularly to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. Appropriate training for staff and governors is undertaken frequently and is up to date, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism. Your vigilance regarding the care and support of vulnerable pupils is rigorous.

Pupils say that they feel very safe and well cared for in school. They feel very confident that adults will help them if needed. Pupils of all ages talk with knowledge about the ways that they can stay safe in a range of situations, including personally and online. The very large majority of parents feel that you and the staff keep children safe and well looked after.

### **Inspection findings**

- It is clear from my brief time with you that you are a hard-working and dedicated leader. You have an accurate, reflective and honest view of the school's strengths and priorities. You have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve and these are shared by staff and governors. The governing body is supportive, challenges you appropriately and makes a positive contribution towards moving the school forward. Consequently, there is good capacity to improve the school further.
- There are a number of strengths within the school. Mathematics is very well led and consistently well taught across the whole school. The high expectations start in early years. For example, some children were able to write and order numbers up to 50. This expectation builds through the school so that by the end of Year 6 well over half of the pupils achieve at higher standards. The overall achievement of pupils who are disadvantaged is also a strength and as a result, the school was identified as the local winner of a pupil premium award in 2016.
- You rightly pride yourselves on the professional development that is available to staff. A number of teachers are new to teaching and to the school, but good-quality induction has ensured that they have 'hit the ground running'. This is reflected in the progress that pupils make. All staff benefit from a range of training and are encouraged to contribute to developing the school, which has resulted in them playing an important part in the school's success.
- Pupils have a very good attitude to learning. They benefit from a wide range of

additional activities and opportunities, including taking part in residential outdoor activities and sports. Pupils regularly have the chance to meet professionals from the world of sport, authors of children's books or local artists. Hey-with-Zion is a school that likes to take every opportunity to celebrate pupils' success, whether it is an individual, such as the pupil that won a 'young engineer award', or the whole school at the end-of-year school prize-giving ceremonies.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to develop and sustain achievement in English to the same high standard as mathematics
- the provision of curriculum subjects, other than English and mathematics, are equally as high-quality as the best, while ensuring that all pupils have balanced experiences across all subjects
- the proportion of pupils persistently missing school continues to reduce.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Eastwood  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and key stage leaders. I also met with curriculum leaders, the learning mentor and the person responsible for maintaining safeguarding records. I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I met with a representative of Oldham local authority. We visited lessons and I scrutinised pupils' work. I took account of the 18 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views of six parents who talked with me before the school day. I took account of the 21 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and spoke with staff during the day. I also met with a group of pupils. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. I looked at school documents, including: information about pupils' achievement; the school's self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; behaviour and incident logs; and documents relating to safeguarding.