

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs Denise Gibbs-Naguar  
Headteacher  
Holy Trinity CE Primary School  
Trinity Road  
Gravesend  
Kent  
DA12 1LU

Dear Mrs Gibbs-Naguar

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Holy Trinity CE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 19 October 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in February 2016, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- eradicate remaining weaknesses in teaching by offering appropriate support and challenge to teaching staff
- improve pupils' outcomes in writing at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2
- strengthen governance further by:
  - liaising with the Diocese of Rochester to fill the remaining vacancies for foundation governors with people with appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding to challenge school leaders

- making links between the school development plan and governor monitoring visits so that governors can accurately evaluate the impact of leaders' actions.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, a group of middle leaders, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan, the review of governance and other school documentation were evaluated. I also toured the school with you and the deputy headteacher.

## **Context**

Since the previous section 5 inspection the former substantive headteacher has left and there has been a range of different interim leadership arrangements. You were due to join the school as substantive headteacher in April 2017; however, your previous school released you early so you could join Holy Trinity in March 2017. The deputy headteacher has been a consistently reassuring presence for the governors, staff, pupils and families during this period of change. Since the previous inspection a total of nine teaching staff, including some with leadership roles, have left the school.

## **Main findings**

Before your appointment, school leaders lost valuable time in making the necessary improvements. Despite the best intentions of a number of interim leaders, there was not a clear strategic overview of what needed to be improved quickly. Staff told me that during this time, they were often given mixed messages about what they should do to improve. Changes were made too quickly on flimsy advice. Too many people were trying to implement small, distinct changes. Despite their determined efforts to do their best, some teachers were left floundering.

Since you joined the school as headteacher, the strategic planning has improved dramatically. Everyone knows what you are trying to achieve and other leaders clearly know what they need to do to achieve your goals. The vision to offer an outstanding education to pupils is very strong. The pace of improvement has accelerated, expectations have risen and morale has improved. Staff told me that the school is now a much happier place and pupils are learning well.

You recognise that the key to the school being judged good or better at the next inspection is the quality of teaching. You have introduced a step-by-step, clear and consistent approach to how pupils will be taught at Holy Trinity. This is based on proven research of what works well. Well-chosen approaches to the teaching of reading and mathematics are already having an impact on raising standards. It was already possible to see this new approach working successfully when we visited classrooms together.

You are determined to develop your wider leadership team so that it has a positive impact on raising standards. Leaders really value the opportunities for continuing professional development they now receive. This includes being part of teacher research groups and visiting other well-chosen outstanding providers. You have developed their role in monitoring the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making. This was an action point from the previous inspection but it is only now that you have given leaders the confidence and skills to do this well. For the first time in a long time, there is capacity within the school to make the improvements needed.

You have evaluated the quality of the curriculum and added many enrichments, using staff who have special expertise or a passion in a different subject. I observed 'Terrific Thursday' with you in key stage 2 where pupils take part in art, music, public speaking, cookery and physical education. Pupils were sensibly behaved while enjoying the exciting activities. Similarly, 'Wonderful Wednesdays' in key stage 1 enrich pupils' learning but also provide a well-planned opportunity for teachers to be released from class to plan, meet and develop their skills together.

Your action plan for improvement focuses on the right things. Each priority is correctly identified, and has measurable success criteria, clear milestones and a plan for how the impact will be monitored by leaders. However, the plan does not currently include opportunities for governors to monitor the impact of the actions leaders are taking.

There are some remaining challenges for you to overcome before the next inspection. You are well aware of these and have plans in place to address them. There is some remaining inconsistency in teaching. Some staff are rising to the challenge of higher expectations quicker than others. You are providing appropriate support through the leader of learning to address this.

The governing body has acted on the outcomes of the review of governance recommended at the previous inspection. The new chair provides strong leadership and ensures that members of the governing body challenge leaders. However, he recognises that the current vacancies on the governing body mean that there is a lack of capacity. Further work is needed to link governors' monitoring visits to the current school development plan.

Despite outcomes generally being at least in line with national averages at the end of each key stage, you were disappointed with the outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 in writing in 2017, which were low. Although I saw many examples of good-quality writing throughout the school, you know that this is an area that needs further development.

## **External support**

The local authority has monitored the progress of the school carefully. It has helped broker support from a national leader of governance for the new chair of the governing body that has been very beneficial. During the period of interim leadership, local authority advisers realised that there was no strategic direction to the myriad of support the school was receiving from different places. They took action to streamline this and focus on what was important. The local authority has faith in the current leadership team to make the improvements needed.

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

Yours sincerely

Lee Selby  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**