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Mr Simon Brereton
Headteacher
Holy Trinity CofE Primary School
Kenyon Street
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Dear Mr Brereton

Short inspection of Holy Trinity CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 November 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 December 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

The school's Christian ethos underpins every aspect of school life. You, your staff and governors have developed a harmonious community in which pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds work exceptionally well together. I found pupils to be welcoming, polite and proud of their school. A typical comment from pupils was: 'Teachers are kind and helpful. They give us challenging work.' Pupils behave very well. They thoroughly enjoy the opportunities they have to take part in sports, trips and residential visits.

You leave no stone unturned in your quest to improve the life chances of pupils in the school. Your evaluation of the school's work is accurate and you have an outward-facing approach to school improvement. You have raised expectations within a caring and nurturing environment. Staff support each other and morale in the school is high.

Governors are ambitious for the school. A governor commented: 'We want the children to have the best start in life, with a strong moral core, and we want them to be happy.' Governors are very clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses and offer challenge and support in equal measure.

All the parents whom I spoke to were very positive about the school. Parents are

delighted with the level of care from staff. As one parent commented: 'The school has a family feel. Teachers are approachable and communication is excellent.' You have worked hard with staff to improve teaching and learning. Teachers have benefited from a range of training opportunities to improve teaching and you hold teachers to account for the achievement of their pupils. As a result, you have improved outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics considerably across the school. Pupils love mathematics and this was reflected in the 2016 progress score in mathematics at the end of key stage 2, which was significantly above the national average. Progress in mathematics continued to be strong in 2017.

Since the last inspection, you have ensured that teachers provide pupils with guidance on how they can improve their work. Teachers use assessment information well to plan lesson activities that challenge the small number of most-able pupils. You have provided training for teaching assistants to support them in developing their questioning skills. Teaching assistants are deployed more effectively to support pupils' learning. As a result of the improved teaching of writing, pupils now use a wider range of interesting vocabulary and complex sentences in their written work. Teachers in the school and across the local authority check to make sure that teachers' assessments are accurate. In 2016, at the end of key stage 2, all pupils reached the expected standard in writing and progress in writing was significantly above the national average. Unvalidated information indicates that in 2017 progress continued to be high.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of vigilance in the school. Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. Staff and governors have benefited from appropriate training and understand what to do should a concern about a pupil arise. Leaders have established strong relationships with external agencies and keep detailed written accounts of all action taken. The safeguarding governor makes regular visits to the school and takes an active role in monitoring any concerns. Parents and pupils say that the school is a safe place to be. Pupils say that there is rarely any bullying.

Inspection findings

- You quickly identified the underlying reasons why outcomes in reading are not as strong as those in writing and mathematics. Your whole-school focus on developing pupils' reading comprehension skills is starting to make a difference. You have invested in high-quality books for classroom libraries and you take pupils to the local library to encourage them to read frequently and to develop a love of reading. Breakfast reading clubs, visits from authors and workshops to help parents support their children are all having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to reading. A review of assessment information and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that progress in reading is improving. However, you acknowledge that this remains an area for further development.
- You were concerned that some pupils had not reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2015. This was because the

quality of teaching in this area was not good enough. This has now improved. Phonics is taught regularly, accurately and in an engaging way. Less confident pupils who read to me used their phonics skills well to help them read unfamiliar words. The most able pupils read more challenging books with fluency and expression.

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the early years has been below the national average over time. Children enter the school in the Nursery or Reception Year with language skills that are well below those typical for their age. Leaders and teachers have made sure that children in Nursery and Reception classes start to build on their speaking and vocabulary skills as soon as they join the school. Training is used to good effect to improve teachers' subject knowledge. Children working with the adults in the Reception classes wrote high-quality sentences and used full stops and question marks carefully. Children currently in the early years make much faster gains in their learning. You and your leaders are determined to build on the improvements in provision seen in the early years, so that more children achieve a good level of development.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard and greater depth in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was below the national average. You have developed well-thought-out plans to address this. Pupils apply their knowledge of grammar and punctuation effectively in extended pieces of writing. Work in pupils' mathematics books shows that they are developing mathematical language and reasoning skills well. Provisional data in 2017 and scrutiny of pupils' work show improvements in writing and mathematics. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points at the end of the early years. However, you recognise that pupils still need to reach higher standards in writing and mathematics.
- You recognise that disadvantaged pupils did not make rapid enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 in 2016. You have a clear plan in place for the spending of the pupil premium funding and know the barriers to learning for these pupils very well. Pupils at risk of falling behind in their learning are identified quickly and given additional support. Inspection evidence shows that disadvantaged pupils are now catching up.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- maintain the sharp focus on improving the overall standards in reading across the school
- increase the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception
- further improve the standards that pupils reach in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1.

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 Tameside. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ahmed Marikar
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, a group of leaders, members of the governing body and parents of pupils from the school. I also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I met with pupils from key stage 2 and spoke informally with others during breaktimes. I visited classes where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils. I also heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read. I carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work across the school. As part of the inspection, I considered three responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text questionnaire and five responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' attainment and progress. Records on keeping pupils safe were evaluated. I undertook a review of the school's website.