

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



13 February 2018

Mrs Proffitt  
Headteacher  
Tittensor CofE (C) First School  
Beechcliffe Lane  
Tittensor  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffordshire  
ST12 9HP

Dear Mrs Proffitt

### **Short inspection of Tittensor CofE (C) First School**

Following my visit to the school on 1 February 2018, 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 April 2013.

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

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

Tittensor has improved considerably since its last inspection. Staff are committed and very self-reflective. They want the very best for children. Staff embrace change and want to constantly improve what they do. This is a school with a positive and happy ethos.

Staff are led by a highly skilled and enthusiastic headteacher. The headteacher is respected by the local community and knows every child. With the strong support of the senior teacher, the headteacher has transformed many aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, outcomes are consistently strong, or improving, across all key stages. A high proportion of children achieve a good level of development at the end of Reception. High standards are maintained through the phonics screening check in Year 1 and in most subjects by the end-of-year assessments in Year 2.

The school is proud of its Christian ethos and has strong links with the local church. Pupils learn about all faiths and religions and say that it is 'OK to be different' at their school. Pupils say that they feel happy and safe and know how to care for one another. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils love the school's buddy system and talk with confidence about how to stay safe online and in the community.

Parents are full of praise for the school and its work. Despite the small size of the school, many parents contributed to both Ofsted's online survey Parent View and submitted comments via free text. Every parent that responded feels that their child is safe and happy and would recommend the school. A typical comment was, 'Tittensor is a wonderful school, with exceptional staff who go above and beyond their role every day.' Parents are particularly happy with the way the school is led and managed.

During the last inspection, the school was asked to: raise achievement in writing by making sure that pupils' skills are developed across the curriculum; and improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that work consistently stretches the most able pupils.

Though outcomes in reading and mathematics are very high, there has been some variation in standards in writing by the end of key stage 1. However, group sizes are often very small, which can make some comparisons unhelpful. Standards in writing are improving. Teachers create opportunities for pupils to write at length in English lessons and practise their skills in most subjects across the curriculum. Therefore pupils are developing more stamina. However, some pupils do have gaps in their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. These are being addressed by the school but there is more work to do.

The level of challenge is broadly high across the school in English and mathematics. This challenge is particularly evident in mathematics. Pupils are routinely given challenges and activities that encourage them to reason and explain their mathematical thinking. The headteacher has introduced several key strategies that have improved teaching and learning in this area of the curriculum. There is some variation in the quality of challenge in other subjects, particularly science.

This is a rapidly improving school with key strengths in mathematics, reading, and pupils' behaviour and well-being. Leaders acknowledge that more work is required to ensure that: any gaps in pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling are fully addressed, particularly in Year 4; the level of challenge rises even further across the curriculum; and pupils' presentation is of a consistently high standard.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at Tittensor and arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff training is a priority. Leaders audit the skills and knowledge of all staff so that they can tailor ongoing training to meet needs. Records show the appropriate actions that designated safeguarding leads take if they have any concerns about a child.

Pupils enjoy a rich curriculum where they learn cycling proficiency, water safety, road safety and how to spot any inappropriate emails on the internet. During the inspection, pupils of all ages were learning how to ride bikes safely with instructors from the local authority. Pupils were safely navigating obstacles and cones on their balance bikes. Everyone was enjoying the opportunity to learn new skills, whatever

the weather! Pupils are also proud to be buddies. Nominated pupils proudly wear buddy pins that let their peers know that they are there to help at lunchtime if a worry arises.

## **Inspection findings**

- The level of persistent absence rose slightly in the last academic year. The headteacher has tracked attendance carefully and offers additional support to families when needed. As a result, overall attendance is improving and is now above national figures. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has been halved in the last year.
- Governors have a clear view of the school's journey of improvement, and like staff, are receptive and keen to achieve even more. They have a significant range of skills and experience. Governors have devised their own self-evaluation to assess the impact of their work. They regularly take stock of the progress they are making. Governors are proud of the school's achievements and acknowledge the importance of embedding the effective work that has taken place over the last two years.
- Teachers use assessment information effectively to inform their planning and meet pupils' needs. Leaders and governors use assessment information to scrutinise any variation in achievement. Performance information is discussed in regular pupil progress meetings and within the governing body. As a result, rates of progress across the school are strong. However, there is scope for a greater level of challenge in the wider curriculum and in some aspects of pupils' writing in Year 4.
- Children make rapid progress in their writing in the early years. Many children have progressed from mark making at the start of the autumn term, to writing sentences independently. The early years is well led and very popular with parents.
- Pupils' writing continues to develop across key stage 1 but that development is not as strong in Year 4. Leaders state that this is due to some historical gaps in pupils' learning, specifically in their acquisition of grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. The school development plan rightly identifies this as an area for further development. There is work to do in ensuring that some pupils are at the highest possible standard before they transition to middle school.
- The level of challenge is generally strong across the school. Staff know pupils exceptionally well. These excellent relationships allow teachers to pitch questioning and learning at the right level. A key strength of the school's work is mathematics. Challenge is consistently high in this subject. Pupils are not as stretched in wider areas of the curriculum, such as science. In some science lessons, activities do not routinely allow pupils to fully practise their writing skills or offer the level of creativity found in other subjects.
- On occasion, some pupils' presentation is untidy. Some teachers are not ensuring that the expectations of presentation set out in the school's policies are fully met by some pupils.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- any gaps in pupils' writing skills, particularly those in Year 4, are fully addressed
- pupils receive a greater level of challenge across the wider curriculum and are able to practise their writing skills even more, particularly in science
- pupils' presentation is of a consistently high standard.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Keay  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you at the start of the inspection to discuss the school's self-evaluation and development plan. We agreed a number of key lines of enquiry to structure inspection activity. We scrutinised outcomes from the monitoring of teaching and learning and took account of self-assessment audits completed by staff.

I visited every classroom and scrutinised progress in pupils' books from a range of subjects. Observations were undertaken jointly with you. We also conducted a separate book scrutiny together.

I reviewed a range of school documentation, including: the single central record, child protection files, attendance information, assessment information, risk assessments, training records and minutes from meetings of the governing body.

I took account of feedback from 34 respondents to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View and 24 responses on free text. There were no responses to the pupil or staff survey. I reviewed written feedback from parents and spoke to several families at the start of the school day. I met with a group of pupils from Year 4.

I held a meeting with four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. I spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone.