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Miss Elizabeth Travis  
Headteacher  
Holy Trinity Church of England Dobcross Primary School  
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Dear Miss Travis

### **Short inspection of Holy Trinity Church of England Dobcross Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 6 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 October 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 local community continues to regard the school very positively. Pupils' attainment remains high and they learn well. They enjoy lessons and wider activities such as karate or joining the very successful school choir. Their attendance is good because they want to come to school. Across classes, pupils show much respect for their teachers and towards each other. They demonstrate an eagerness to learn and an increasing ability to cooperate, investigate and solve problems together. During the inspection, for example, it was very striking when a Nursery child used and explained the word 'collaboration' accurately in discussion with a member of staff.

Staff and leaders celebrate pupils' efforts in activities as well as their achievements, through attractive displays in corridors and classrooms. This helps to make the school an enjoyable place to study and learn. Leaders use the school's Christian ethos to shape the life of the school successfully. Many of the pupils' learning activities reflect the caring, community ethos. Pupils develop a strong understanding of Christianity and values such as love, respect and service.

At the previous inspection, inspectors recommended that leaders continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning. You have achieved this, and at the same time two thirds of staff at the school have changed. Leaders make sure that they and staff learn through better links with other local schools. Staff are beginning

to gain more insights into the teaching of colleagues in the wider area, as well as sharing their own successes with others. Even so, you and I identified that in mathematics, some pupils need to be given more challenging work when they grasp concepts quickly.

Inspectors also asked the school to improve pupils' progress in writing. You addressed this successfully in subsequent years. However, the expectations set in the new national curriculum are higher. National changes in how schools assess pupils' learning also mean that information about pupils' outcomes in 2016 and 2017 cannot be compared with previous years. At Holy Trinity, pupils' attainment in writing remains high but their progress is average. In the early years, some activities to develop children's writing are not challenging enough.

Senior leaders and middle leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Staff and leaders are pursuing clear priorities and actions to help even more pupils make strong progress in their writing and mathematics. They recognise the need for even more pupils to achieve and exceed the standards expected for their age. Leaders conduct surveys of the views of parents, pupils and staff to help pinpoint aspects of their work that can be improved further. Leaders use the feedback they receive to help them manage changes in the school with sensitivity and care.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders check that the school premises are safe and secure. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and can raise any concerns they may have with staff. Messages for pupils and visitors about safeguarding are displayed clearly around the corridors. Staff, leaders and governors are trained regularly about safeguarding. Leaders share information about national and local child protection issues regularly with staff. Governors are clear about the local risks to pupils and how the school responds to these. Staff give much attention in lessons and assemblies to helping pupils to stay safe, including when they are online. Staff understand how to report, record and chase up any concerns they may have about pupils' protection and safety. Leaders are strengthening arrangements to review the school's documents about safeguarding. They recognise that some required information is missing from the school's current child protection policy. The many established safeguarding practices and procedures in the school show that this issue does not indicate wider weaknesses.

### **Inspection findings**

- Staff's teaching of mathematics is improving well this year due to the skilful leadership of the subject coordinator and better support for staff. Teachers and teaching assistants are growing quickly in their understanding of mathematics. Planned activities are more challenging and interesting. Many pupils enjoy learning this subject. They are developing greater skill and confidence in solving complex problems. Pupils are becoming more adept at explaining their thinking to others. The proportion of pupils achieving strongly, for example in Year 6, is

increasing this year. Even so, in some year groups, pupils' learning slows. This is because they are given too few opportunities to deepen their understanding when they grasp a new mathematical concept quickly. Leaders recognise the need to build on recent improvements in order to accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics throughout the school.

- Leaders analyse assessments of pupils carefully to identify common issues and challenges for their progress in mathematics. Staff and leaders give much emphasis to building pupils' self-image, their determination and their ability to persist when work is hard. Leaders are strengthening pupils' self-belief and confidence to complete formal assessments in mathematics, but it is too soon to judge the impact of this work.
- The teaching of writing is improving, and teachers now assess pupils' abilities more carefully. Leaders share their insights into the work of other schools with Holy Trinity staff. Staff celebrate pupils' writing extensively in attractive displays throughout the school. Pupils' efforts, as well as their improved writing skills, are formally and frequently rewarded by staff and leaders. Pupils' handwriting is becoming much more tidy, fluid and accurate. Their current work, for example in Year 2 and Year 6, shows that they make at least good progress in their writing. Pupils are refining their writing skills with increasing success. They use a range of interesting language in their writing. Their use of punctuation and grammar is becoming more skilled. Pupils spell tricky words more successfully and demonstrate their ability to write extensive and thought-provoking work, for example writing thoughtful pieces about a Christmas Day letter home from a soldier in the trenches of World War I. Leaders and staff are starting to address the need for some pupils to edit their own work more carefully.
- Children in the early years thrive because staff support them well to explore, question and reason. For example, in Reception, children used charts on clipboards to tally how many toy bears they could find in different colours. The task set for them by the teacher challenged them to add together their totals. Children enthused in their learning, leading to much successful discussion of numbers above 20. Children's language and communication skills develop well because of skilful staff support. Children also gain from many opportunities to use toys to make pretend worlds and to construct fascinating structures with blocks. Even so, some activities to develop children's writing are not challenging enough.
- The leader for early years makes careful use of data about children's attainment and progress to inform priorities for teaching. This gives the improving work of staff a clear direction and focus.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in writing and mathematics accelerates so that even more achieve and exceed the standards expected for their age
- staff give pupils work that deepens their mathematical learning when they grasp new concepts quickly

- staff in the early years give children even more meaningful opportunities to write.

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

Tim Vaughan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I:

- visited a sample of classrooms to observe learning with the headteacher
- reviewed a sample of pupils' work with senior leaders
- met with the leaders for English, mathematics and the early years
- met with senior leaders to discuss their evaluation of the school
- met with six governors, including the chair
- spoke by telephone to the school improvement partner
- spoke with parents and carers as they brought their children to school
- reviewed 37 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View
- considered responses from 27 pupils to an Ofsted survey
- spoke with pupils in lessons
- reviewed responses from seven staff to an Ofsted questionnaire
- checked a range of safeguarding information and policies.