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Mr Stephen Smith
Headteacher
Tarleton Holy Trinity CofE Primary School
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Dear Mr Smith

Short inspection of Tarleton Holy Trinity CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 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 December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You lead a calm and friendly school with strong Christian values. You teach pupils to care for others and to be confident in their own abilities. The school is at the heart of the local community and pupils enjoy taking part in many activities and celebrations in the village and local area.

You and your deputy headteacher's strong and determined leadership have ensured that pupils thrive. You lead an enthusiastic team of staff who are keen to do their best for all pupils. The training that you give staff is developing them all the time. Teachers share their ideas and skills to improve teaching and learning. For example, you have adopted strategies to make sure that pupils make good or better progress in mathematics.

Governors share your high ambitions for the school. They use their skills to keep a close watch on pupils' progress and to make sure that the school continues to go from strength to strength. As a result of their effective monitoring, governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors have checked that recent improvements in the teaching of phonics are improving standards. They have a realistic understanding of your steps to improve the impact that subject leaders make on learning.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is because you have planned an enjoyable curriculum which develops their skills in different areas. You teach pupils to

appreciate other cultures and religions. Pupils in Year 6 were keen to show me their bright and detailed paintings of Uganda. A Year 3 display of work showed pupils' care and attention to detail in creating patterns based on Islamic art. Pupils relish the many opportunities that you give them to represent the school in sports and in choir events. They are very proud of their achievements such as reaching the finals of a singing competition. Through such varied opportunities, you develop pupils' confidence and skills.

Parents and carers overwhelmingly support the school. Their responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, commonly identified your 'brilliant' leadership, strong community links and excellent communication between school and home. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were keen to share how successfully staff have supported pupils. Parents particularly appreciate your presence on the school playground at the start and end of each day. A typical comment was that you make 'everyone feel welcomed and valued'.

Leaders have taken appropriate actions to address the areas for development identified at the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved strongly. Pupils across the school achieve well in computing and use their skills in other areas of the curriculum. In lessons, teachers challenge and stretch pupils and teach them to be resilient when work is tricky. In 2017, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was above national averages in writing and mathematics. In reading, attainment was in the top 1% of schools nationally. The number of pupils reaching higher levels in these subjects was above national averages. Your careful tracking of current pupils' progress show that in some classes some pupils are still not achieving as highly as you would like in writing. Leaders have identified ways to develop pupils' writing skills across the curriculum, for example in science, geography and history. In the Reception Year, children do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing skills through play, including in the outdoor area.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have made sure that safeguarding arrangements are thorough and of high quality. Safeguarding takes a very high priority across the school. You have carried out all the statutory checks on the suitability of staff to work with children. Governors and leaders have ensured that the appropriate monitoring and filtering arrangements are in place for the school's internet connection. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe both online and in the wider community, including in relation to road safety and fire safety. Parents and staff agree that pupils are safe.

Through very regular training, staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. They know exactly what to do if there are any concerns about a pupil. You and your staff keep meticulous records relating to pupils' welfare. Leaders share information with parents and the appropriate authorities to make sure that pupils are safe.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, the first of which related to how well children learn in the Reception Year. The indoor and outdoor classroom areas are bright and attractive. Staff plan interesting activities which match children's interests. Children play with concentration and cooperation and move calmly around the classroom. In the role play area, a small group of children were dressed as farmers and working hard to dig vegetables out of soil. Outside, children were working together with great enthusiasm to build a snowman. Such activities support children in improving their social and physical development. Children make good progress in different areas of learning although their progress is not as strong in writing. Leaders have correctly identified that staff could provide more opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills.
- I also looked at how well pupils develop their skills in phonics. This was because in 2017 the number of pupils reaching the expected standard in Year 1 was below the national average. I found that you have taken appropriate steps to improve the teaching of phonics. Leaders have visited other settings to look at outstanding practice. Staff have attended training to improve their skills. You have changed the way that phonics lessons are organised and increased their frequency. I could see the impact of your actions in lessons and in the checks that you make on pupils' progress. Pupils' attainment in phonics has risen and is now in line with national averages. Pupils read and write words and sentences confidently.
- I also looked at how well pupils achieve in mathematics in key stage 2. This was because in 2017 pupils at the end of Year 6 had attained well in mathematics but their progress was not as strong as in reading and writing. I found that you have taken steps to increase teachers' subject knowledge and teaching strategies in mathematics. As a result, pupils develop a secure understanding of number and are confident and accurate in their written calculations. Teachers use questioning very skilfully to develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. Staff teach pupils to 'have a go' and to not give up when work is challenging. The impact of the improvements that you have made is evident. Pupils make good progress in mathematics.
- During the inspection, I found that subject leaders demonstrate a secure knowledge of the subjects for which they are responsible. They share your determination to raise standards even further across the curriculum. In mathematics and English, staff check pupils' progress very carefully and identify how teaching can further improve. In foundation subjects such as art, history and geography, you and your staff are developing ways to measure pupils' progress and to use this information to improve teaching and learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there are more opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills in the Reception Year
- pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are given opportunities to develop their writing skills in subjects such as science, geography and history
- the roles of foundation subject leaders are embedded so that they have a greater impact on teaching and learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Stevens
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and your leadership team. I also met with six governors, including the chair of the governing body. I met with eight pupils from key stage 2. I visited classes in each key stage with you, where I observed teaching and learning and spoke with pupils. I looked at pupils' work in a range of subject areas. I also heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.

I took account of responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including free-text responses. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, information about pupils' attainment and progress, and teachers' performance management monitoring. I also evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep pupils safe, safeguarding checks and attendance information. I undertook a review of the school's website.