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5 April 2018

Rev Chrissie Millwood
Headteacher
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Dear Chrissie Millwood

Short inspection of Holy Trinity CofE Secondary School, Crawley

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 2018 with Christopher Lee and Peter Rodin, Ofsted Inspectors, 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment as headteacher two years ago, you have swiftly and accurately identified which aspects of the school need development. You have worked tirelessly with senior leaders, middle leaders, staff, pupils and parents to bring about improvements, especially in the quality of teaching and, more recently, in giving a greater focus to pupils' learning.

You provide strong leadership with a clear sense of purpose and direction. Your analysis has helped you to identify issues relating to pupils' progress and to take effective action to bring about improvement. For example, the prompt action you took to improve standards in mathematics by working with an outstanding provider is beginning to have a benefit. Throughout the school, there is a strong drive to raise the expectations and aspirations of both staff and pupils.

Your strong commitment to every pupil succeeding, irrespective of their background or ability, is shared by governors, leaders and staff. You believe passionately that the school makes a difference to pupils' future chances in life and use this to guide your principles and decisions. You have created an environment that fosters the care and nurture of the whole school community, driven successfully by the school's Christian values.

Pupils' progress and attainment continue to be close to national averages. However, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is below that of their peers, although

improving because the school is better focused on their needs. The school is working hard on removing other gaps through earlier intervention, positive action and ongoing training. Relative underperformance by boys is being addressed through training and improving boys' performance in language and literacy.

You have worked hard to develop teaching across the school and your involvement in the Teacher Effectiveness Enhancement Programme is having a positive impact on improving classroom practice. This is supported through a comprehensive induction programme and an appraisal programme which matches professional development to the needs of staff and the school. Opportunities to regularly share good practice as well as peer observations are also having a positive impact.

Inspectors identified particularly strong learning and progress in English, Spanish, French, art, dance, drama, technology and psychology. In these lessons, learning walks confirmed teachers' secure subject knowledge, strong relationships with pupils and supportive interactions. Learning and progress in humanities were less secure but leaders are well aware of the problems and have plans in place to address them. Pupils rated their teachers very highly, especially in the sixth form.

Your curriculum is appropriately adapted to the needs, abilities and interests of all pupils. The curriculum ensures that all pupils can leave the school with recognisable qualifications which enable them to progress on to higher education, employment or training. The sixth-form curriculum provides an appropriate range of A levels and vocational courses which are responsive to pupils' aptitudes and future needs. This is evident from the high numbers of pupils staying on in the sixth form.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school has effective procedures for safeguarding and risk assessment. These meet statutory requirements and include high-quality checks on adults and a carefully planned approach to managing the safety of pupils. The safeguarding policy is very comprehensive and the single central record is fully compliant. The extensive staff training programme has ensured that all staff are conversant with child protection requirements. There are clear reporting procedures if staff have any concerns and regular safeguarding updates as well as frequent reminders to staff, pupils and parents. Senior staff and governors have received safer recruitment training and apply this to the recruitment and selection of all new staff.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is strong. Pupils told us that they feel safe and secure in the school. They are aware of different forms of bullying and say that all forms of bullying are actively challenged and dealt with effectively. Pupils spoke positively about the advice and support provided about online safety and the opportunities to talk about their worries, concerns and challenges. They were well informed about homophobic and racist bullying as well as knife crime. The very large majority of parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children were safe and well looked after.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, three specific lines of enquiry were agreed with you and the senior staff. The first line of enquiry considered outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and what the school was doing to secure improvements. In the 2017 examinations there was a significant gap between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and their peers. However, the gap between these pupils and their peers is now narrowing and much closer to national averages as a result of better data, focused intervention and a greater awareness by teachers.
- In particular, professional development had been focused on different groups and teachers are better aware of their disadvantaged pupils in class. In most classes, these pupils had been carefully seated to partner them with good role models and maximise their accessibility. The school has also worked hard to improve these pupils' attendance by making use of the school's reward system. As a result, their attendance is improving significantly.
- In addition, the English department has worked hard to develop disadvantaged pupils' reading skills through the accelerated reader programme. The programme has seen a considerable improvement in reading scores, especially in Years 7 and 8. Pupils have also been involved in the 'Widening Participation' course offered by the University of Sussex, which aims to provide young people with the insight to make informed choices about their future.
- The second line of enquiry concerned the consistency of teaching and learning in the core subjects as well as in humanities. English lessons observed contributed significantly towards pupils' progress as a result of strong lesson planning and challenging work. However, in mathematics, science and humanities, lesson observations and work scrutinies suggested that learning and progress were much more variable, with noticeable improvements in mathematics and science.
- Recent support from an outstanding school had contributed well to these improvements in mathematics. The schemes of work are well written and lesson planning more challenging and focused. In science, improvements were evident in books and through pupil assessments, which had seen a rapid improvement in performance across all three sciences. In the humanities, lessons observed were more inconsistent and this was confirmed by the work scrutiny.
- The third area of focus was the leadership and governance of the school, especially with regard to key stage 3 and the sixth form. Leaders had already identified the issues raised in this inspection and were addressing these with commitment and determination. Governors are knowledgeable, supportive, perceptive and share the same aspirations as school leaders. They regularly review the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Leaders have worked hard to develop the curriculum in key stage 3 and ensure that schemes of work are challenging and developmental. The quality of teaching seen in key stage 3 was similar to that in the other phases. Leadership in the sixth form is particularly effective. The school acknowledges that value-added data in the sixth form needs improvement, but lesson observations, work scrutinies, school data and student interviews confirm much better achievement now.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes for pupils who are disadvantaged improve to match those of their peers with similar starting points
- teaching and learning are more consistent across the school, especially in humanities.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Metcalf
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors undertook a series of accompanied learning walks, visiting 31 lessons, and looked at pupils' work as well as speaking with pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. They looked at a wide range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, development plans, assessment information and documents relating to safeguarding. The lead inspector spoke with governors, met with a group of middle leaders and had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. The inspection took account of 73 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire, 351 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey and 72 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as the accompanying written responses.