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Mrs Susan Callaghan
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Callaghan

Short inspection of Christ Church CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 May 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your leadership team have developed Christ Church within the context of its Christian ethos. This ethos runs through the heart of the school and all that you do. You have created an extremely caring and purposeful learning environment. Staff know pupils well as individuals and take great care to support their academic and personal development.

Staff are proud to be members of the school. They say that you lead the school well and that you support them effectively with their work. They feel that you do all that you can to ensure that there is a motivated, respected and effective team. Staff work together to ensure that pupils achieve well in mathematics, reading and writing. As a result, pupils are keen and confident learners who make good progress from their starting points in these subjects. Some less-able pupils, though, could make even more progress if their work was more precisely matched to their needs. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress across the school and are well supported. We agreed, though, that more could be done to raise the standards that pupils achieve in other subjects across the curriculum, such as history, design technology and geography.

The parents and carers I spoke to informally at the start of the day were very positive about the school. Typical comments included, 'From day one it has been a really positive experience' and, 'I can only speak highly of the staff.' These views were endorsed by the majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Parents

took time to phone me or approach me directly during the inspection to tell me how much they valued your support and that of your staff. They told me that the school responded well to their concerns. They recognised many of the challenges a small school faces but praised your work in avoiding these becoming an obstacle to success. They appreciate your hard work in ensuring that their children have every opportunity to achieve, not just academically, but also across a wide range of sporting opportunities. A small number of parents did feel, though, that some incidents of misbehaviour were not always dealt with quickly and clearly enough.

The behaviour of pupils I met with and observed around the school was exemplary. This is due in part to all staff promoting the values that permeate the school. There is a strong sense of mutual respect between pupils and staff. Pupils say that they like the teachers as they give them a good education. Pupils told me: 'Teachers will always help you, they never ignore you. This is an amazing environment to be in.'

You have a strong and highly effective governing body. Governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities. This is having a significant impact on the quality of leadership across the school. They are forward thinking and constantly seek opportunities to improve the quality of their work. Governors have a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They support and challenge leaders effectively.

Governors know the school well and take every opportunity to gather a range of information about the school from different sources. This includes drop-in sessions for parents, working with the church community and making regular visits to the school to speak with staff and children. In the community, they have led a highly effective road safety campaign to keep pupils at the school safe.

Your staff and governors are committed and dedicated to providing the best possible education for pupils. They wholeheartedly support the priorities identified in your extensive school development plan. Together, you have identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school correctly. Your school development plan sets out a range of areas for the school to focus on to secure further improvement. However, you acknowledge that, currently, plans do not identify clearly enough who will check and who will evaluate the impact of actions. We agreed that the impact measures by which leaders and governors will judge the success of their actions are not sufficiently clear. This prevents governors monitoring the work of leaders with even greater depth. We also agreed that your self-evaluation lacks precision in identifying clearly the strengths of the school, as well as those areas which are not yet as well developed.

At the time of the last inspection, inspectors recognised the many strengths of the school. They did, though, ask you to look at ensuring that teachers know how to improve learning so that all pupils make the very best progress of which they are capable. Inspectors also asked you to look at the standard of presentation in pupils' work. You have done much work on these areas. Although presentation in books is much improved, there are still some inconsistencies in how teachers ensure that all pupils make good or better progress across the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. You ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements are well organised and that records are securely maintained and fit for purpose. Records of the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children are clear and comprehensive. Staff understand their role in keeping pupils safe at school. Staff are confident in their understanding of how to report any concerns and the designated safeguarding leader liaises appropriately with other agencies, ensuring that concerns are followed up in a timely manner. Leaders know how to seek advice from specialist support staff should the need arise.

The pupils I spoke to told me that they feel safe and happy at school. They told me there was no bullying and that on those rare occasions when some pupils do misbehave, it is dealt with immediately by staff. They told me how well the school was helping them to understand how to keep safe, both inside and outside school. They explained how hard the staff worked to help them understand how to stay safe online. Parents' views were also positive. The overwhelming majority agreed that pupils are safe and well cared for.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, to check whether the school remains good, we agreed a number of lines of enquiry. The first of these was to ensure that all pupils in the school are receiving a broad and balanced curriculum and that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. You have done much work to ensure that pupils have a range of experiences in other settings by linking with other schools and arranging a rich programme of visits and visitors to the school. While the school curriculum has many strengths, you rightly recognise that there is still more to do in ensuring that all pupils have access to a rich, diverse range of curriculum opportunities across a range of subjects. Subjects such as history, geography and design technology are not yet as well developed as other subjects.
- Leaders of subjects across the school are highly capable and enthusiastic about the areas they lead. However, they do not yet have enough time to check how well children are making progress across a range of subjects. While planning for improvement in each subject is extensive and thorough, they do not have enough time as leaders, or at staff development meetings, to enhance the curriculum in their subjects. It is at times unclear what the key targets for improvement are in these subjects, what actions are being taken to improve them and what the impact of this work has been.
- We also agreed to look at the consistency of teaching across the school and how it was ensuring that all pupils were making the best progress they could from their starting points. We looked at how well work was being matched to the needs of all the pupils across school. You have taken action to improve teaching and raise expectations. Although the quality and consistency of teaching and teachers' skills in matching levels of work to the needs of pupils are much improved, some inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching across the school.
- You have successfully created a culture where everyone is valued and supported as a learner. Staff appreciate the investment that leaders make in them by providing high-

quality professional development. They share your high aspirations for the school. You have created a culture of aspiration and of determination among staff and governors alike. All are focused and determined. All those involved in the school value your high-quality leadership and support.

- Leaders and governors work closely together to consider the school's future direction and priorities for improvement. These are set out in policies and plans. However, improvement priorities are not always linked sharply enough to clearly described success criteria. As a result, governors are not able to measure progress towards intended targets effectively.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching across the school is of a consistently high standard
- they improve the rigour of school development planning by making sure that improvement priorities are linked with clear targets and impact measures
- all those responsible for leading the curriculum have greater opportunities to monitor their subjects and identify clear areas for improvement, and have sufficient opportunities to work with staff to improve their practice in these areas.

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

Michael Tonge
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and a group of governors and staff. I met with a representative of the local authority. I observed pupils around the school and in their classes. Together, we visited all the classes, observed teaching and learning, looked at books and spoke to pupils about their work. I also met with six pupils to seek their views of the school. I listened to six pupils read. I met parents on the playground at the start of the school day. I took account of the 18 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including free-text responses, the 37 responses to the pupils' survey and the seven responses to the staff survey. I looked at a range of documentation relating to different aspects of the school's work.