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Mrs Kathy Weston
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Dear Mrs Weston

Short inspection of Trinity Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 June 2018 with Ofsted Inspector Kerry Rochester, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been tackled successfully and the school has many strengths. It is a harmonious and ambitious community. This is particularly commendable as the school has undergone significant change and experienced considerable turbulence in the last two years.

From September 2016, the school was led by two acting headteachers and two executive headteachers until you took up your post in September 2017. This was a period of much change and uncertainty, during which time governors failed to establish a clear strategic direction for the school. Inevitably, staff were unsettled by this. They were unsure what responsibilities lay with different leaders. It was not clear to staff why some decisions had been taken. This lack of clarity, coupled with a lowered morale, led to a decline in the quality of teaching. As a result, some pupils made slow progress in that period.

Once the local authority became aware of the issues, it acted to stabilise and clarify leadership arrangements. A new governing body was appointed to secure effective leadership in the short term and to direct the long-term future of the school. The new board of governors is strong. It strikes a sensitive and effective balance

between supporting you to achieve your vision for the school and challenging you to prove it is working.

From the challenging start caused by these events, you have created a very strong sense of teamwork. Your staff are loyal to you and highly committed to doing their best for pupils. You hold them closely to account for pupils' progress. They appreciate the renewed sense of purpose this brings and try to live up to your high expectations of them. As a result, the quality of teaching is generally strong and improving further. Consequently, pupils are making swifter progress than in recent years and standards are rising. You and your staff say there is still a way to go to achieve your ambition. You believe that some pupils could reach higher standards and that a small amount of teaching could be better. However, what you are doing is working.

Staff appreciate the clarity of your vision and the way you communicate it. They say they can be open and honest about things that are working well and things that they are having difficulty with. Teachers trust you to support them in their quest to teach as well as they can. They enjoy learning from one another too. As a result, there is a tangible buzz of enthusiasm. This permeates to pupils. They are confident, happy learners who work hard and are keen to please.

You provide teachers with helpful feedback about their work, showing them what they need to do to improve. Most teachers act well on this advice. As a result, their teaching improves quickly. Occasionally, however, a few teachers do not keep up with the suggested changes to their practice. One reason why this happens is that senior leaders believe the changes have been implemented consistently but do not check routinely that this is the case.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe and promoting their well-being are clear, relevant and followed vigilantly by all staff. Staff are very well trained about the potential risks posed to pupils in school and within the wider community. For example, you provided specific training recently to educate staff about the dangers of a particular type of drug abuse that had occurred in the local area. Your leaders work very closely with partner agencies, such as social services and the local police force, to ensure that they are doing all they can to help pupils and their families get the support they need.

Parents and carers value highly the lengths that staff go to in order to protect their children. They gave many examples of these to inspectors. These included the extensive action taken by the school following an incident of inappropriate social media activity among some pupils out of school hours. Parents said they felt extremely well supported in understanding the issue and knowing how to respond.

Inspection findings

- Staff work hard to promote pupils' love of reading. An investment in high-quality

books is working. Pupils talk enthusiastically about what they read in school. Some also say that they read more at home now. You know that others remain less convinced about the pleasures of reading. Therefore, your efforts to capture their interest continue.

- Pupils' reading is improving because leaders ensure that teachers focus on the fundamental skills. For example, leaders provided high-quality training in the teaching of phonics. As a result, pupils now learn their letter sounds quickly and get off to a good start with recognising words.
- Similarly, leaders know that pupils need a wide vocabulary in order to read effectively. Teachers take many opportunities to teach pupils new words. For example, in a mathematics lesson seen during the inspection, the teacher insisted that pupils used the term 'denominator' correctly when explaining their work on fractions.
- Nevertheless, some older pupils still struggle to understand what they read. This is because they have not learned systematically how to do this. Teachers now allocate more time to teach pupils the skills they need to make sense of complex texts. However, a few teachers are less confident in how to use this time as effectively as they might. Therefore, while most pupils are getting better at reading effectively, a few still find it hard.
- Some pupils have not achieved well enough in recent years in English and mathematics. Most are now catching up to where they should be, given their capabilities. This is because teachers identify precisely what it is that pupils need to get better at. They plan work that fills the gaps in pupils' knowledge and moves them on to the next bit of learning.
- However, a few teachers are less skilled at spotting pupils' weaknesses. As a result, some pupils lack the confidence to apply essential basic skills accurately. For example, they do not use phonics effectively to help them spell simple words. Similarly, some older pupils struggle to complete mathematical problems correctly because their recall of number facts is inaccurate. Leaders know this is, in part, a legacy of weaknesses in the teaching of some basic skills. They are already taking action to ensure that teaching covers these more systematically in the future.
- Leaders have identified that, on occasion, pupils' progress is hampered because their teachers allow them to hand in poor-quality or sloppy work. For example, a few teachers fail to notice when pupils make basic errors in their spelling, grammar, punctuation, handwriting or calculation skills. When they do spot careless mistakes, some teachers do not insist that the pupil makes corrections or works more carefully next time. Leaders have asked these teachers to be more vigilant. Nevertheless, a minority of pupils continue to make the errors because their teachers do not routinely uphold high enough expectations.
- The school provides increasingly well for pupils who are looked after by the local authority. Leaders ensure that the teachers take full responsibility for implementing pupils' personal education plans. As a result, pupils looked after are beginning to achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Substantial efforts to improve pupils' attendance are paying off. The amount of

time missed by some pupils has reduced notably. Overall, pupils' attendance is now in line with the national figure. It is rising for all groups of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- no teachers permit basic errors in pupils' work, such as in spelling, handwriting, grammar and simple calculations, to persist
- the newly introduced systematic approaches to teaching basic skills enable all pupils to spell correctly, reason mathematically and fully understand what they are reading.

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

Yours sincerely

Sandy Hayes
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, other school staff and a group of governors, including the chair. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I spoke informally to pupils in lessons. I looked at the 41 responses to the Parent View survey and 44 staff questionnaires. I visited lessons with senior leaders and looked at the work in a selection of pupils' books. I considered the school's self-evaluation and its plans for development. I took into account pupils' standards of attainment and rates of progress. I read a range of documents, including those related to safeguarding and child protection.