

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



10 January 2019

Mr Paul Bowlas
Headteacher
Holy Trinity CofE Junior School
Church Lane
Ripon
North Yorkshire
HG4 2ES

Dear Mr Bowlas

Short inspection of Holy Trinity CofE Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 18 December 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 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. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You have made sure that the school has continued to succeed through the continued focus on positive relationships, which are built on the school's values. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Leaders make sure that the mental health and well-being of staff and pupils are a priority. Staff are nurturing and caring, addressing pupils' emotional needs with sensitivity and without disruption to others.

Leaders are highly inclusive in their approach and find opportunities to make sure that everyone has a chance to shine. Pupils are given numerous responsibilities. They rise to this challenge and take pride in contributing to the running of the school. As one pupil described, 'It helps us be independent and understand others.'

Staff are developed well and appreciate the leadership opportunities they are given. You make sure that all staff develop as leaders and understand the contribution they make to achieving the school's aims. Consequently, staff have incredibly high expectations of themselves and pupils. They take great pride in creating a highly purposeful learning environment where work of high quality is displayed effectively

for all to see. Pupils are proud of their school and rise to the high expectations from staff. They move around the building in a calm and orderly manner. Their singing during assembly is of exceptional quality and demonstrates how staff are determined to realise the high standards they aspire to achieve.

Parents are also incredibly positive about the school. They recognise the strengths in leadership and that staff go the extra mile to make every pupil feel safe, welcome and included in school life. Parents of service children, in particular, appreciate the quality of the transition process, which has helped their children to settle well into the school.

At the last inspection, you were tasked with improving the quality of teaching and raising standards at the end of key stage 2, particularly in writing. You have made sure that pupils are assessed on entry to school. This supports leaders to set challenging targets and make sure that learning meets pupils' needs. This is particularly important given the number of pupils who join and leave school other than at the usual times. Books show that pupils who are new to school make rapid progress due to the high expectations from staff and the strong quality of teaching and learning. You have also strengthened leadership at all levels by giving a wider range of staff responsibilities and accountability for pupils' outcomes. You have been determined to implement teaching approaches, which research has shown to be effective. This has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Additionally, the healthy challenge from governors, the local authority and diocese has ensured that you have continually built on successes and addressed any emerging weaknesses. As a result of these actions, pupils' outcomes have improved over time. By 2018, attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 were well above the national average.

You are keen to work closely with the local infant school, as you recognise the importance of this in ensuring that pupils get off to a flying start when they begin key stage 2. The recent federation of the two schools has begun to offer you more formalised ways to make sure that pupils are well prepared for the curriculum and teaching approaches they will encounter in key stage 2. You acknowledge the value in staff sharing their expertise, for example in the teaching of phonics, to provide even more effective support for pupils who have gaps in their prior learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. You have made sure that procedures are fit for purpose and effective. Records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders make sure that staff are well trained so they can identify and respond swiftly to any concerns. Leaders use external agencies effectively to support the school's work. If leaders feel that agencies are not taking the necessary action to protect pupils, leaders pursue this until it is satisfactorily resolved.

Relationships are strong between staff and pupils. There is a nurturing and caring approach, which pupils value. This contributes well to their positive attitudes to learning. Consequently, as a result of such positive relationships, pupils are confident that they know who to speak to if they are worried at all. Pupils say that

bullying is very rare, but they are working together to make the school a bully-free school. The curriculum is well designed to make sure that there are countless opportunities for pupils to learn about keeping themselves safe and healthy. For example, all pupils complete a daily mile and learn to ride a bicycle. They also learn about staying safe when crossing a road or if they are using the internet or social media.

Inspection findings

- Over the last three years, progress and attainment in reading have improved from below average to above average by the end of key stage 2. By 2018, reading attainment was well above average. 89% of pupils met the expected standard with 39% reaching the high standard.
- The English leader is passionate and enthusiastic about pupils' reading. In response to attainment in reading being below the national average in 2016 and 2017, the English leader introduced an evidence-based approach to the teaching of reading. Staff have received training on developing pupils' love of reading. Staff are now increasingly confident to select high-quality texts across the curriculum. Teachers read regularly to pupils and units of work in English are often based around challenging texts. Additional and equally challenging books are also available through the well-stocked library and in classrooms. Pupils agree that there is lots of choice and that books are interesting and appropriately challenging. They are successfully inspiring pupils to read widely and often. As one pupil said, 'They stretch our vocabulary.' Support for parents about reading, which has been made available on the school's website, is effective in setting expectations and generating parental involvement. This is making sure that pupils continue reading regularly at home. Each class also has a nominated 'Reading VIP' who picks a favourite book or author. Pupils say that this intrigues them to read something different and makes sure that they consider a variety of books in their reading diet.
- Across the curriculum, the identification of key vocabulary supports pupils in gaining subject-specific knowledge. This helps pupils in building knowledge and understanding in each subject, while also increasing their understanding of reading material encountered throughout the curriculum. Pupils' books, from across the curriculum, show that pupils are making links between subjects well. For example, there are lots of opportunities for using and applying reading, writing and mathematics knowledge in science.
- Regular assessment means that staff are aware if pupils need additional support. A range of intervention activities take place to support pupils' reading. For example, leaders identified reading stamina as a barrier to some pupils' reading. Year 6 pupils, who had received this intervention, said that it helped them to read at a faster pace and with greater understanding. Progress for disadvantaged pupils has been broadly average over time. When pupils are new to the school, they are assessed carefully so that gaps in their learning are identified. Books show that they are making good progress as work is closely targeted to meet their specific needs.
- Leaders are aware that, on entry to key stage 2, pupils have had different

experiences, expectations and teaching approaches. You know there is more to do in ensuring that pupils make the strongest possible start. For example, pupils who did not meet the expected standard in the phonics standard by the end of Year 2 do not always have a close enough focus on the use of phonics for reading and spelling. Leaders are keen to address these curricular transition issues as part of their federation with the infant school and your forthcoming executive headship from January.

- A 'grammar for writing' project has resulted in more carefully crafted sequences of learning in English. Units of work allow pupils to build their knowledge in real contexts. They rehearse techniques, such as the effective use of grammar, in preparation for a final piece of work. At the beginning of the year, in a small number of cases, these sequences were less well developed. However, leaders' actions to address this has resulted in greater consistency throughout school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the federation with the infant school is strengthened further to create a clear curricular transition, which enables pupils to make the best possible start to key stage 2
- staff share curriculum knowledge and expertise, for example in the teaching of phonics, between year groups, so that staff have a secure understanding of the age-related expectations in year groups other than their own.

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

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with a range of leaders. I spoke to a group of governors, including the chair and vice-chair. I also met with a representative of the local authority and had a telephone discussion with a representative of the diocese. I evaluated documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, and information about safeguarding. We visited classrooms together to observe teaching and learning. I met with the English leader and together we scrutinised the work in a sample of pupils' books. I listened to six pupils read and met a group of eight pupils from a range of year groups. I spoke with several parents at the start of the school day and considered the 68 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I considered the 30 responses to the

staff survey.