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Dear Miss Fenlon

Short inspection of Holy Trinity CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 March 2019, 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 February 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Despite a period of instability resulting from changes in staffing, a significant increase in pupil numbers and a new school building, you have maintained an environment that fosters the care of pupils. This is driven successfully by the school's strong Christian values.

You ensure that pupils learn well because there is a thorough process of quality assurance, which includes lesson observations, analysis of pupils' work and assessment of pupils' outcomes. The local authority representative I spoke to confirmed the continuing improvements in teaching and learning across the school. Governors keep themselves well informed through regular visits to school and scrutiny of leaders' work. They offer appropriate challenge and support. Leaders and governors work effectively together to ensure that any areas identified as needing further development improve.

Responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire show that parents and carers are generally pleased with the education that you provide. Those parents I spoke to confirmed this and said that staff were very approachable. One typical comment noted, 'Staff are always polite. They treat every child with respect.' Pupils who spoke with me during the inspection supported this view. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are very positive. They are polite and courteous. In the classroom, pupils concentrate well and collaborate readily with each other when asked to do so.

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve pupils' handwriting and presentation of work. These are now strengths of the school. Pupils take pride in their work and have opportunities to develop their skills across a wide range of curriculum areas. Work in pupils' books and observations in lessons show that pupils' handwriting is very neat and well-formed across the school. This has a positive effect on the quality of pupils' writing. You were also asked to develop the skills of middle leaders. Middle leaders now form a cohesive team. There are focused meetings to check on pupils' progress and effective systems to evaluate the accuracy of assessments. These enable subject leaders to provide well-targeted, effective support for teachers and teaching assistants. Your closer monitoring of pupils' progress means that the tracking of your most vulnerable pupils is also effective.

Additionally, you were asked to improve outcomes for the most able pupils. As a result of leaders' actions, many of these pupils develop their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively. This is particularly evident where pupils undertake activities that are very closely matched to their abilities and where they are challenged and supported skilfully by the adults in the room. This results in pupils who are on task and who respond positively to teaching. Work in pupils' books shows that there is increased challenge for the most able pupils. The school's own assessment information also shows that progress for these pupils is improving. However, the work given to some of the most able pupils does not stretch their thinking enough. Where this is the case, they do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that effective action is taken to safeguard pupils. Training is up to date, records are well maintained and the pre-employment checks on teachers and other staff are thorough. You are watchful of the needs of your vulnerable pupils and any who are causing concern. Staff ensure that they use the school's reporting systems to pass on concerns they may have about pupils' welfare.

You ensure that pupils receive a wide range of curriculum and pastoral guidance so they know how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. For example, during the inspection, police officers visited the school to discuss the dangers of knife crime with older pupils. When questioned, pupils said that they feel safe. They said that falling out does occur sometimes, but they do not worry because teachers deal with it quickly and effectively.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection we agreed several areas of enquiry. The first of these was the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve pupils' outcomes in English, including phonics. You have introduced a new system for the teaching of phonics. The phonics lessons we observed together were interactive and fun. As

a result, pupils were interested and enjoyed their learning. Pupils I heard read were able to use and apply their phonic skills to identify sounds when reading different words. This is also true for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). For example, in Year 1, a pupil who speaks English as an additional language used their phonics knowledge to write, 'I can see a seegul flying hiy in the skiy.' Several parents spoke highly of recent workshops that enable them to support their children's phonics learning at home. All these actions have contributed to an improvement in pupils' phonic knowledge.

- You have successfully improved pupils' positive attitudes to reading. Effective staff training has resulted in a structured reading curriculum and pupils are developing a broad range of reading skills. Teachers read appealing books and text extracts to pupils to motivate them both to read and to write. As a result of the careful choice of texts, many pupils take great pleasure in reading. Leaders are committed to improving the vocabulary of children when they enter the early years. Adults listen to pupils read frequently, which helps pupils develop confidence and fluency when reading. Staff have a clear understanding of how to effectively develop pupils' reading skills in areas such as inference and information retrieval. Pupils' progress in reading is now good. Standards are rising across the school, and you remain focused on helping more pupils to read at greater depth.
- Leaders have also introduced a structured programme to teach writing from Nursery to Year 6. There is a regular focus on developing the skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation. Pupils use these skills well in their independent writing and the impact was clear in the writing that I looked at. Due to effective support from staff, pupils I talked to were aware of what they need to do to improve and could discuss the content of their work, sometimes in depth. Teachers show good subject knowledge and share the purpose behind activities. This is effective in linking the teaching of writing with reading. As a result of these actions, work in pupils' books, displays around the school and the school's assessment information all show that most pupils now make strong progress in writing.
- The second line of enquiry considered the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve pupils' progress in mathematics. Leaders have been proactive in developing the teaching of mathematics throughout the school. Mathematics leaders have undertaken an effective review of how the subject is taught. Improved planning and assessment, together with coaching for staff, have resulted in more rapid progress in mathematics. Your recent actions are having a positive impact, particularly, but not solely, on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. As a consequence of this structured approach to the teaching of mathematics, pupils are making better progress. During the inspection, pupils were effective in undertaking word problems, developing their ability to use mathematical vocabulary and applying their reasoning skills. However, this is not fully embedded across the school. This means that not all pupils are able to tackle more complex, unfamiliar problems with success either in mathematics or in other contexts across the curriculum.
- Finally, we looked at the actions you have taken to reduce persistent absence. Leaders monitor attendance effectively. Your increased focus on pupils who are

not attending school regularly has resulted in persistent absence decreasing. You work very effectively with outside agencies to offer support to families of pupils with low attendance. You have used a wide range of strategies to make sure that pupils attend school regularly, such as meetings with parents, which are consistently followed up. Leaders have also worked sympathetically with families to help remove barriers to regular attendance. Your information shows that persistent absence is currently in line with the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to develop pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics so that pupils can tackle more complex problems with success across the curriculum
- they embed strategies to provide appropriately high levels of challenge for the most able pupils.

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 Manchester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Hunter
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with pupils about their work and school life, both formally and informally. I held meetings with you and spoke with members of staff to discuss improvements in their areas of responsibility. I visited classrooms jointly with you and your deputy headteacher to observe pupils' learning. I also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

I scrutinised pupils' work to evaluate their learning over time. I spoke with parents and took account of 26 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 14 free-text responses. I also took account of 28 responses to the online staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the online pupil survey.

I looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, reports from external consultant visits and information about pupils' progress. I also evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe, safeguarding checks and attendance information. I undertook a review of the school's website.