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Mrs Alice Jones
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Dear Mrs Jones

Short inspection of Oxenhope Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 June 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 December 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Effectively supported by the local governing body and the Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust, you have successfully steered the school through uncertain times. You lead with a clear moral sense and a determination that every child will receive the very best. You are clear that although pupils at the school do well compared to national averages they could do even better. Now that leadership is secure, the school is well placed to make rapid and sustained progress. Staff morale is high. Staff feel fully involved in the planning and execution of the school's continued improvement. Parents are very supportive of the school and the service it gives them and their children.

You know your community well and respond to its needs. Your openness and accessibility were commented on, very positively, by many of the parents I spoke with. The strong relationships which you and your staff have with parents are an important aspect of the school's work. They help ensure that parents feel fully involved in their children's education. The very high percentage of parents who attend subject workshops and 'stay and play' sessions at the school are clear indications of this. The school's work to support children and their families who, from time to time, need extra support and guidance is very effective and a real strength of the school.

The previous inspection report published in December 2014 identified the need to further develop the skills, knowledge and influence of subject leaders. The

inspection undertaken by the diocese in February 2016 also mentioned the need to develop the roles of middle leaders. You have addressed this very effectively in the comparatively short time that you have been head of school. Subject leaders are skilled, knowledgeable and enthusiastic. You, working with the trust and governing body, have developed their roles in the school. Working with you, they have identified areas that need further development and led regular training for staff in subjects such as mathematics, religious education and early reading. They have then monitored the effect of their work with staff through visits to classrooms and regular conversations. As a result, there have been significant improvements in, for example, mathematics and writing.

You have developed an interesting curriculum that is, increasingly, focusing on subjects beyond English, mathematics, science and religious education. You and the governors are very clear that a broad curriculum, rooted in subject-specific knowledge and skill, is essential to pupils' success, now and into their futures, as informed, responsible citizens. The curriculum is underpinned by a wide range of clubs and before- and after-school activities and sports. These help pupils develop a range of skills. The curriculum also takes full account of, and provides opportunities for, pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, as well as the importance of developing healthy approaches to eating. You and governors are clear that there is still more to be done to develop the curriculum. You have detailed plans in place that seek to build on and further extend the depth and breadth of pupils' knowledge and understanding.

You are developing a whole-school approach to reading which is rooted in ensuring that all pupils are fluent, discerning readers. Phonics is very well taught by skilled staff. These staff monitor pupils' progress in reading often and carefully. They intervene promptly when anyone falls behind. A love of and familiarity with books and reading begins in early years and is encouraged throughout the school. Pupils read and are read to very regularly. As they move up the school, staff ensure that pupils read high-quality texts and books that are increasingly challenging. This helps them deepen their comprehension skills. It also helps them in their own development as they see the connections between the literary devices they read in books and their own writing and the interplay between them. As with the curriculum, you and governors are aware that there is still more to do to ensure that reading lies at the heart of the school. Your plans are well advanced to ensure that this is the case.

The local governing body knows the school and the community it serves well. It is realistic about what needs to be done and is highly motivated. It has set in place rigorous checks of the school's performance that challenge and support the school. You keep governors informed with detailed information about how the school and its pupils are doing. They do not rely on this alone to make their assessments about how the school is doing. Governors, including the chair of the governing body, visit the school regularly to talk with staff and pupils. In addition, there are increasingly fruitful links between governors and middle leaders of subjects and areas at the school. These links give governors detailed insights into the challenges facing staff as they implement change and improvement. This means that the local governing

body, working with and supported effectively by the trust, is knowledgeable and able to take effective action.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are regularly updated and are of high quality. Governors monitor the accuracy and quality of these records through regular visits and checks.

You have established and maintain a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. You, your staff and the governing body, effectively supported by the trust, take your safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. You ensure that regular and effective training is provided for all staff and governors. As a result, they are all up to date in their knowledge and understanding of all aspects of safeguarding. You have very strong links with outside agencies. Your dealings with these agencies are very detailed and show that you act appropriately. You engage with the local authority promptly and follow up safeguarding issues tenaciously.

Pupils are safe, and they say that they feel safe. They said that there are regular training sessions at school that help them keep themselves safe, including when online. They said that they knew about the range of forms that bullying can take and what to do if it happened to them or to a friend. They said that if they did feel concerned about anything, including bullying, they could tell a member of staff and that they were very confident that adults at the school would deal with it promptly and well.

Inspection findings

- Children in Reception are safe and well behaved and learn how to get on together. Classroom routines are well established and relationships among the children and between adults and children are open and kind. Phonics is well taught. Children explore books and writing regularly. Historically, the percentage of children reaching a good level of development has been disappointing, bearing in mind their starting points. More recently, because of strong leadership, more focused, child-specific teaching and greater support, the percentage reaching a good level has improved significantly. Parents are encouraged to play a very active role in their children's learning. They appreciate and welcome this. Parents are very complimentary about the ways in which staff in early years keep them informed about their children's progress and happiness. The percentage of parents who attend 'stay and play' and other sessions run by the school is high.
- Phonics is effectively taught. I saw examples of teachers and teaching assistants teaching phonics with confident assurance, developing pupils' skills and moving promptly to address misconceptions. Historically, the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 has also been above the national average across the last three years. End of key stage 2 tests show a gradual improvement across the last three years. Disadvantaged

pupils make progress and achieve as well as and often better than their peers.

- In your role as the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), you work very effectively with staff and governors to monitor pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). You assess pupils' needs promptly and help staff develop their skills through regular training sessions. Staff expectations for these pupils are high. Staff monitor their progress very carefully. As a result, these pupils make good progress from their starting points. Communications with parents are very effective, open and fruitful.
- Subject leaders are a strength of the school. The mathematics leader, for example, has introduced a new, well-researched, whole-school approach to mathematics. This is having a positive impact on staff knowledge and confidence and pupils' engagement, pleasure and skill in mathematics. Working with you, the mathematics leader has trained staff and then monitored the effect of the training and the new approach on pupils' progress. You have been careful to ensure that the new mathematics approach is firmly embedded by amending aspects of it and making it appropriate to the needs of the pupils and staff at the school. Pupils, including those who are the most able, told me that they thoroughly enjoyed it and the ways it helped them clearly see their progress.
- Staff, including teaching assistants, are knowledgeable and skilled. They use insistent, yet kindly, questioning to extend and deepen pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 5 debating session I saw both the teacher and the teaching assistant using deft questioning to encourage all pupils, including those with SEND, to play a full role in a lively debate about sports and gender stereotyping. The debate was marked by politeness, taking turns and mutual respect.
- Pupils told me that they love coming to school. Overall attendance is above the national average. Incidents of persistent absence are comparatively rare. When, from time to time, there are incidents of persistent absence, the school is vigorous in its engagement with these pupils' families to encourage and support them, working successfully with them to remove barriers to regular attendance.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and do well. They are also kind to each other; aware of the needs of others. The school provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their skills as leaders, as members, for example, of the 'safety squad'. It also emphasises the positive impact on learning of careful organisation and resilience. Pupils' behaviour around school and in class is impeccable. I saw no examples of pupils behaving inappropriately. The school's own records of behaviour show that poor behaviour is very rare. The school is careful and appropriate in its support of pupils who, from time to time, find compliance with the school's high expectations for good behaviour challenging. Their parents and families are fully involved with the school in agreeing the best ways to support their children so that they get the very best out of their education.
- When I asked a group of key stage 2 pupils whether and how the school prepared them for life in modern Britain, they told me that because of their teachers' work, particularly in religious education, geography and history, they understood something of the world beyond school and Oxenhope.
- Parents are very satisfied with the education and care the school offers their children. They spoke with real energy about the care that the school takes to

keep them informed of their children's well-being and progress. They also spoke positively about staff and their availability. As one parent wrote in a text to me: 'There has been a massive improvement to the "general feel" of Oxenhope School in the last year due to Mrs Jones and her team. Both children and parents feel really positive about the exciting teaching and learning taking place as well as the general day-to-day running of the school.' They added, 'We wouldn't hesitate to recommend this school to anyone and feel lucky to have it in our village.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the development of the whole-school approach to reading continues to be a high priority across the school with an emphasis on further developing staff's skills as teachers and champions of reading so that pupils deepen their love, experience and skills as readers
- they continue to develop and embed the wide ranging and interesting knowledge and skills-based curriculum beyond English, mathematics, religious education and science, so that pupils are even better prepared for their next steps as learners and as thoughtful, considerate and informed citizens.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust, the director of education for the Church of England Diocese of Leeds, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bradford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Evans
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited all classes, apart from Year 4 who are out on a residential trip, to observe learning and talk with pupils about their work. I was accompanied by you in all these visits. I scrutinised a range of pupils' books. I spoke with you and other leaders, including with you in your role as SENCo, the leader of early years and leaders of religious education, early reading and mathematics. I also spoke with two governors, including the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer and primary lead of the Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust. I observed and spoke informally with pupils at the start of the day and during break and lunchtime. I spoke with parents at the start of the day. I met with eight key stage 2 pupils, formally, to discuss their views of the school. I also listened to and discussed reading with four Year 2 pupils and their teacher. I took account of the views of 18

staff who responded to an anonymous survey undertaken during the inspection. I considered the 25 text messages from parents and the views of the 28 parents who responded to Ofsted's online facility, Parent View. I also considered the views expressed by a parent in a letter sent to me at the school. I scrutinised a range of documents about the school's safeguarding systems, monitoring, staff training, attendance and local governors' work.

I also observed a whole-school act of worship on the theme of trust.