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Mrs Andrea Swift  
Holy Trinity Rosehill CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Swift

### **Short inspection of Holy Trinity Rosehill CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 February 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 December 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Senior leaders and governors have responded resolutely to a period of staffing instability and weaker academic performance. The acting headteacher provided clear and purposeful leadership in the absence of the previous headteacher. She worked with senior colleagues, local authority partners and governors to strengthen leadership and introduce stronger systems to monitor progress and improve assessment. As a result, pupils achieved much better progress at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. These processes are being further developed with the arrival of the new headteacher in January 2018. The school has a strong capacity for improvement.

Senior leaders have addressed a number of the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report. Subject leaders have explored new contexts for writing. After a dip in standards in 2016, subject leaders have introduced new strategies to promote independence in pupils' writing and this is contributing to improving rates of progress. New assessment practices and approaches are supporting current pupils in making better rates of progress. Teachers are exploring the use of challenge tasks to stretch pupils, although this work is not consistently embedded across all classes. There is evidence that outdoor areas have been enhanced in the early years, with more imaginative and purposeful use of learning areas.

Senior leaders have taken considerable action to build leadership capacity. They have given subject and phase leaders increased responsibility for developing good practice and monitoring standards. Subject leaders have introduced new initiatives

to develop expertise in the mathematics curriculum and to encourage new approaches to reading and writing. Governors have supported the purchase of dedicated resources in these areas. Senior leaders have given middle leaders much greater responsibility for checking the effect of their improvement plans on pupils' progress and attainment. These actions contributed to much better outcomes for pupils in 2017, a pattern that is continuing for the current cohort of pupils.

Senior leaders have also improved the strength of monitoring and evaluation practices across the school. A new assessment leader has been appointed to ensure that leaders and governors have regular insight into pupils' progress. Pupil progress review meetings take place every half-term and teachers are held to account for the progress of the pupils in their classes. Governors attend progress meetings and receive timely insights into pupils' progress. New assessment systems also provide renewed strategies to measure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result of better progress information, teachers are more able to modify teaching and interventions to support better rates of progress. Leaders and teachers have worked closely with neighbouring schools and local authority partners to improve the accuracy of assessment. Teachers have worked diligently to develop an accurate view of the standards of their pupils' work in the context of the national curriculum. This was reflected the reliability of teachers' assessments against external results in 2017 and in local authority moderation of pupils' work.

Leaders and teachers have developed a more robust approach to addressing the increased expectations of the new national curriculum. The weak outcomes of 2016 made all teachers aware that standards were not good enough, but resolute action has been taken to secure improvements. Leaders and governors have invited challenge and support from local authority and diocese improvement partners. This has improved the quality of teaching and strengthened leadership. Leaders have visited other schools to enhance expertise and this is contributing to improvements in mathematics teaching and to improving provision in the early years.

Governors have appropriate expertise and have intensified their involvement in the school following a period of staffing instability and weaker outcomes. They have invited further challenge to their own practice through a successful local authority review of governance and they have future plans to work with a national lead for governance to enhance their practice. They are regular visitors to the school, visiting every half-term to measure the pace of improvement and assess the effect of improvement strategies.

Senior leaders have done much to build capacity. There is a joint sense of purpose across the wider leadership team. Much stronger systems of monitoring and evaluation underpin the school improvement journey and they are ensuring that initiatives are regularly checked and reviewed. While there remains some variation in the consistency with which new standards and expectations are being applied, it is clear that the capacity for improvement is strong and that the momentum for heightened progress is continuing.

## **Safeguarding is effective**

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders make thorough checks on the suitability of adults working at the school and are suitably trained in safer recruitment. Leaders pursue concerns over pupils' welfare thoroughly and record them assiduously. School leaders and members of the governing body undergo appropriate training to enable them to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities. Leaders also ensure that staff receive up-to-date training on a range of safeguarding issues.

Pupils spoken with say that they feel safe in school and the vast majority of their parents and carers agree. They say that bullying is rare and that staff are effective in addressing any potential instances of bullying. Pupils were able to discuss the actions they could take to remain safe, for example the actions needed to stay safe online and to avoid the potential threats posed by strangers.

## **Inspection findings**

- Leaders have introduced new strategies to raise expectations and improve pupils' progress in mathematics. This contributed to improving progress in 2017 and increasing proportions of pupils working at greater depth at the end of key stage 2. Work in books shows that pupils are being given increased opportunities to apply their reasoning and problem-solving. Current performance information indicates that pupils are making better progress across the majority of year groups, although improvements are not consistently implemented across all classes.
- Improvements in teaching and assessment are enabling work to be pitched at levels that are supporting better rates of progress. Middle-ability pupils, who underperformed significantly in many areas in 2016, made much better progress in 2017, although less significantly in mathematics. Boys are also making better progress. Increasing proportions of higher-ability pupils are working at greater depth of understanding in the majority of year groups, although consistently high expectations are not securely embedded across all classes. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities made better progress in 2017 and there is evidence that stronger monitoring systems are supporting better progress, although some variance remains.
- Leaders and teachers are securing improving outcomes for pupils at key stage 1. In 2017, increasing proportions of pupils achieved greater depths of understanding in reading and writing, although this was below that seen nationally. Pupils' progress in mathematics in 2017 at the end of key stage 1 was weaker. Key stage leaders are working with subject leaders and teachers to raise expectations and monitor progress more closely. As a result, the current progress of pupils is much stronger as improvement trends are acquiring greater momentum.
- Leaders have introduced stronger tracking systems to check the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Teachers are much more aware of the needs of these pupils and teaching and interventions are more effectively supporting progress.

In 2017, disadvantaged pupils made better progress than their peers in reading and writing but weaker progress in mathematics. They also achieved better outcomes than their peers at key stage 1. This performance is reflected in their current progress where they are equalling or surpassing their peers in the majority of year groups. Actions to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils have been less successful. Despite regular monitoring meetings with the attendance officer, leaders and governors have not taken sufficiently effective action to secure improvements in the attendance of these pupils.

- New leadership and a largely new early years team are continuing to improve provision in the early years. This has contributed to improving progress and increasing proportions of children achieving a good level of development over the past three years. Leaders have worked with local authority advisers to enhance the learning environment and the quality of assessment. The indoor and outdoor learning environments support more effective learning and play, with teachers encouraging an effective balance between teacher-led learning and activities prompted by children's own interests and needs. The outdoor learning environment is now more imaginatively organised. Children were seen planting beans in response to a reading of Jack and the Beanstalk, although some areas are still lacking in prompts to help children make the most from their learning and play.
- Leaders have cultivated a calm and purposeful learning environment. Pupils show respect for one another and their teachers. They have a strong understanding of the school's values that underpin their interactions with one another and their teachers. Pupils listen attentively when required and work productively in group tasks.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- further raise expectations across all classes and the level of challenge in lessons to enable increasing proportions of pupils to work at greater depths of understanding
- embed new approaches in mathematics teaching to accelerate pupils' progress across all classes
- continue to develop the roles of middle leaders and the wider leadership team to ensure that new approaches and higher expectations are implemented across all classes and year groups
- intensify the actions of leaders and governors in securing improvements in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Kirtley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

As part of the inspection, I explored the actions taken by leaders to improve pupils' progress and to improve outcomes for a range of groups of pupils. I also examined pupils' progress at key stage 1 and the actions taken to improve outcomes and attendance for disadvantaged pupils. In addition, I explored how far improvements in the early years had been maintained.

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, senior and middle leaders. I also spoke to five members of the governing body, including the chair. I held a meeting with a group of pupils and talked to pupils less formally in lessons. I also talked to the educational development partner from the local authority and held a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner from the diocese. I looked at learning in lessons with you. I also looked at pupils' work in books and folders. I examined the school improvement plan as well as other documents, including the school's self-evaluation, behaviour and attendance records and assessment information. I examined safeguarding documents, including the single central record. I took into account 71 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and 37 parental free-text responses. I also took into account 67 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 31 responses to the staff questionnaire.