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Miss Laura Trelfa
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Dear Miss Trelfa

Short inspection of Micklehurst All Saints CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 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 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. Together, leaders, governors and staff have created a haven where pupils thrive. You embrace the school's Christian values wholeheartedly. As a result, staff and pupils model these values in all aspects of their school lives. Pupils liken the school community to 'one big, happy family'.

Pupils enjoy school. They appreciate the considerable leadership opportunities the school offers. These include being a member of the student council and the ethos council. Following a whole-school focus on how to stay healthy, you appointed health and sport ambassadors. Through this role, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 promote the importance of leading a healthy and active lifestyle. With enthusiasm, they lead a joyful exercise routine for younger pupils each morning. This activity ensures that pupils are energised for the day ahead.

Pupils feel that they have a voice. They explained to me how leaders and staff listen to and consider their views. Pupils take seriously the opportunity to make the school even better. For example, the introduction of a box in each classroom was the result of a proposal made by the student council. The aim of this initiative is to provide all pupils with another way of expressing any concerns that they may have.

Parents and carers are equally positive about the warm and welcoming community you have created. A parent described the school as 'happy, friendly and positive'. This is typical of parents' responses. All the parents who responded to Ofsted's

online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school to another parent. They spoke positively about the excellent care that 'approachable staff' provide. The pastoral support and guidance offered to pupils and their families are, without a doubt, a forte of the staff at the school.

Staff are exceptionally proud to be part of the school's community. They explained to me that leaders provide them with opportunities to progress in their careers. You have created effective partnerships with other local schools. This allows staff to access training that supports the development of their teaching. As a result, the quality of teaching is going from strength to strength, and pupils make good progress. Staff are passionate about their roles. They are highly motivated and committed to securing the best outcomes for pupils.

Governors have an accurate and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. They bring skills to their roles from a variety of sectors, some outside of education. This allows them to ask pertinent questions of leaders. The governors also share your commitment to ensuring that a strong Christian ethos permeates every aspect of school life.

You have an incisive view of what aspects of the school require refinement. You provide clear direction for staff. This ensures that they are well equipped to remedy any relative weaknesses. For example, you have successfully addressed the areas that inspectors identified at the previous inspection. Staff check on pupils' learning as a matter of routine, and teachers carefully monitor pupils' progress. As a result, staff can provide help and support to those pupils who fall behind. This allows these pupils to make fast progress and catch up with others. These improvements in teaching have had a particularly positive effect on pupils' progress in both reading and mathematics.

You have worked with determination to improve the level of challenge in mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils. You have ensured that the teaching of mathematics is consistently strong across all year groups. Staff receive appropriate training and you have invested in resources to allow pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge. As a result, pupils have more opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. You showed me examples of how pupils apply their mathematical skills in science, geography and history. As a result, all pupils, particularly the most able, make much stronger progress in mathematics.

Your plans to improve the school further are sharp and precise. For example, you are keen to ensure that the proportion of pupils working above the expected standard in their writing at key stage 2 improves. You are also taking the necessary action to increase the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development in the early years.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The system to check that adults are safe to work with children is secure. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and frequent updates on matters relating to the safety of pupils. Staff are clear about the procedures they must follow if they have concerns about a pupil. Leaders and governors have created a vigilant community.

Records of leaders' work with other agencies are well organised. These records show that staff provide pupils and their families with appropriate support. As a result, pupils feel safe and happy in school. They are confident that there is an adult they can go to if they have a problem.

Pupils also learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Parents and staff are confident that pupils are safe in school. Pupils reported that bullying is rare because they learn about the importance of 'being kind to each other' and the dangers of bullying. Pupils explained to me about the confidence they have in their teachers to deal with incidents of bullying effectively.

Inspection findings

- I was interested to know about pupils' behaviour. This is because, in the past, the proportion of pupils excluded for a fixed period was higher than the national average.
- Leaders provide appropriate support for the small number of pupils who have difficulty managing their own behaviour. As a result, the proportion of pupils excluded for a fixed period has reduced considerably. Leaders have created a calm and harmonious learning environment. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour consistently well across all year groups. The overwhelming majority of pupils display consistently positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are polite, courteous, friendly and respectful towards each other and adults in the school. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils support the good progress that pupils make.
- I wanted to learn more about the rates of attendance for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. This is because, in the past, rates of pupil absence for these groups have been above the national average.
- You have ensured that the attendance of these groups of pupils is a priority for staff. Staff monitor pupils' attendance more closely and provide help and support for families if their child's attendance becomes a concern. This support has had a positive effect. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities who are regularly absent from school is now below the national average.
- I was interested to learn more about the progress of pupils, particularly the most able pupils, in writing. This is because the proportion of pupils who achieve

above the expected standard in writing at the end of key stage 2 has been below national averages in the past.

- In pupils' work, there is strong evidence that those at key stage 2 make good progress in their writing. For example, pupils in Year 4 use paragraphs accurately to organise their writing. This is because teachers show pupils exactly how to improve their work. Teachers provide pupils with a range of opportunities to plan and produce pieces of extended writing across a range of different genres. The least able pupils and those pupils of middle ability make strong progress in their writing. However, you acknowledge that teachers do not challenge the most able pupils to use more sophisticated techniques in their writing soon enough.
- Children in the early years arrive at the school with skills and understanding that are typically low for their age. Teachers in the early years plan learning that accurately matches the needs of children. As a result, children make good progress. However, because of their low starting points, the proportion of children who go into Year 1 having achieved a good level of development is below the national average.
- Leaders in the early years have sharpened further their assessment. This is allowing staff to identify more quickly those pupils who fall behind in specific areas. As a result, children in the early years are already beginning to make even better progress.
- Teachers' refined approach to assessing children's progress and leaders' effective transition arrangements allow pupils to catch up by the end of key stage 1. Nonetheless, ensuring that a higher proportion of children achieve a good level of development remains a priority for leaders.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers challenge the most able pupils to improve their writing sooner, in order for them to make faster progress throughout the school
- they embed recent changes in order to improve the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development in the early years.

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

Yours sincerely

Emma Gregory
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders, a group of teachers and a group of pupils. Leaders accompanied me on visits to classes where I observed teaching and learning across subjects. I looked at work produced by pupils in writing at key stage 2. I also looked at pupils' work in mathematics at key stage 1. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. I also spoke with an adviser from the local authority, the school improvement partner and some members of the governing body.

I examined a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, governance and leaders' analyses of attendance information. I considered the school improvement plan and leaders' self-evaluation. I also checked on the contents of the school's website. I considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I also took into account responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and written responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text facility.