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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Diane Smith
Headteacher
Heaton St Barnabas' Church of England Aided Primary School
Rossefield Road
Heaton
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD9 4DA

Dear Mrs Smith

Short inspection of Heaton St Barnabas' Church of England Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 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 July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment, shortly after the last inspection, you have improved the school further. You have created a friendly, inclusive school, where children become part of a community of care and respect. You have established stronger relationships with parents and carers. One parent summed up the views of others, saying, 'The staff are always helpful and never without a warm smile'. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain, are particular strengths.

At the last inspection, inspectors challenged leaders to improve teaching further, particularly the teaching of mathematics. Outcomes in mathematics have improved. The progress of pupils has been at least consistent with that of pupils nationally. Last year, by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2, pupils' attainment in mathematics was above average. A higher than average proportion of pupils at the end of Year 6 last year met at least the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined.

At the last inspection, inspectors identified some weaker behaviour in a small minority of older pupils. I looked carefully at behaviour throughout the school and was impressed with the way pupils conducted themselves. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive because of the strong learning culture you have established.

Inspectors also asked leaders to raise attendance levels. You have worked diligently to improve attendance and have had success in reducing the persistent absence of a small number of pupils recently. Too many parents take their children on extended visits abroad without your authority. This has a disproportionate, negative impact on overall absence figures.

Last year, by the end of key stage 2, some pupils had done less well in reading than in writing and mathematics. While reading outcomes over time have generally been similar to those nationally, roughly one in five pupils do not reach the expected standard by age seven and again at age 11. You have rightly prioritised the leadership and teaching of reading over the last few years. More recently, leaders have redoubled their efforts to improve outcomes. This is improving pupils' reading comprehension skills throughout key stage 2 especially. Furthermore, pupils are developing attitudes towards reading that are more positive. You recognise that there is scope to sharpen practice further.

Governors, who collectively have a range of suitable skills and experience, take seriously their responsibilities. The governing body is well organised. Individual governors are adept at analysing and interrogating the information about pupils' achievement you give to them. They know the school well and offer you, and other leaders, considerable challenge. The governing body contributes to the vision and direction of the school. Governors are not complacent, do not accept disadvantage as a reason for underachievement, and are determined to improve pupils' outcomes further. The governing body is rigorous in its duty to ensure that adults safeguard pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The record of the checks made on adults so that they can be considered safe to work in school is accurate. Several leaders and governors are trained in safer recruitment practice and follow the guidance well. Adults know their duties, including what to do if they have concerns that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They understand the potential risks of radicalisation. They report concerns, and leaders keep detailed records of these concerns. Leaders take assertive action to ensure that pupils get the help they need.

Pupils say that where there are rare instances of bullying, such as name-calling, adults are effective at dealing with them so they eventually stop. Adults teach pupils how to stay safe. For example, pupils know how to stay safe online. This includes knowledge about the risks of social networking and online bullying. Pupils' good behaviour and the way they learn to respect diversity make a positive contribution to their feeling safe.

Inspection findings

- I observed exemplary behaviour from many pupils in lessons and around the school site. You have successfully created a safe culture in which pupils learn to manage their own behaviour and to exercise self-control. Peer mediators take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils value the opportunities to talk through any conflict and they are encouraged to consider the feelings of others. They build strong friendships. In lessons, pupils are attentive. The teaching I observed engaged them well. When working independently, and in pairs or groups, pupils are conscientious and complete their tasks. Pupils enjoy time to discuss the questions their teachers ask them, which they do with enthusiasm.
- The rate of attendance is currently better than it was at the end of the 2016/17 school year, but remains below last year's national average. Absence rates are a priority for the governing body and leaders. Leaders shared with me examples of substantial improvement in the attendance of a number of pupils because of the tenacious and diligent actions of adults. Breakfast club has had a positive impact on a few pupils, who apart from attending more frequently, are better prepared to engage with learning from the start of the school day. The attendance officer monitors the attendance of pupils meticulously and takes appropriate action, with leaders, when necessary. Currently, too many pupils are absent for more than 10% of the time. Most of these absences are as a result of parents taking their children on extended leave without your permission. This remains a stubborn problem despite your persistence and appropriate actions.
- You ensure that the curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. You promote values that are common to all major world faiths. Pupils have a well-developed knowledge of diverse cultures and faiths. For example, pupils were able to tell me about pilgrimages within different religious traditions and their similarities. Pupils know about influential people, past and present, such as Martin Luther King and Malala Yousafzai. Pupils are encouraged to debate respectfully. A large proportion of pupils develop leadership skills through involvement in peer mediation, and in eco-, worship- and fair-trade teams. Because of this and other work, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong.
- Leaders are knowledgeable about the reading process. You have wisely sought support and challenge from reading experts. You and other leaders lead by example, teaching groups of pupils weekly, sharing your effective practice and coaching others. This school year, you have introduced a set of strategies that are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' engagement with reading and their comprehension skills in key stage 2. Teachers are adept at building pupils' vocabulary, including that of the large proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Children get off to a good start in reading in Reception. Effective teaching of phonics means that most pupils reach the required standard by the end of Year 1, and almost every pupil by the end of Year 2. You are expecting modest gains in attainment this year in both key stages, particularly in the proportion of pupils on target to be reading at greater depth.
- Despite the strong and effective work to improve reading, I identified some areas where practice can be sharpened even more. While teachers, in phonics lessons,

give pupils books perfectly matched to their developing phonic skills and knowledge, the books pupils take home to practise with are not always suitable. A small but significant minority of pupils continue to struggle with their reading in lower key stage 2. Sometimes they are given, and choose, books that are too hard to read. Interventions for pupils who begin to fall behind in their reading in key stages 1 and 2 are not always successful in helping them to catch up.

- Leaders have taken some successful steps to begin to increase pupils' positive attitudes to reading. Teachers read appealing books and text extracts to pupils to stimulate their writing, but do not take enough opportunities to read high-quality, enjoyable whole books to pupils of all ages. Too many pupils do not cultivate pleasure in reading and books.
- Leaders make checks on the quality of the teaching of reading, identifying strengths and weaknesses and providing some useful feedback to teachers. However, these checks do not shine a bright enough light on the specific impact of teaching on learning in key stage 2. Checks are not systematic and regular enough to bring about more rapid progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the monitoring of reading is more systematic, especially in key stage 2, and shines a brighter light on the specific impact of the teaching of reading on learning
- children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 are given books to read aloud, and to re-read, that are well matched to their emerging phonic knowledge and skills, and that do not require them to use other strategies to work out words
- books for the least able readers in key stage 2 are well matched to their developing knowledge and skills, so they make faster progress
- interventions for those pupils who fall behind in their reading are monitored closely to ensure that pupils catch up quickly
- pupils develop and maintain more consistently positive attitudes to, and pleasure in, reading.

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

Yours sincerely

Philip Riozzi
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

You and I observed teaching, learning and behaviour together in several classes. I observed the behaviour of pupils around the school, including at lunchtime and breaktime. I listened to a few pupils read aloud and had discussions with small groups of pupils, including members of the school parliament. I held discussions with you and other leaders and met with five governors. I also met with a representative from the local authority. I examined a range of records and documents, including the self-evaluation document, school improvement plan, notes of the checks leaders make on teaching, pupils' assessment information, and safeguarding records. I scrutinised pupils' work from a sample of their workbooks. I spoke face-to-face with one parent and took account of 11 written responses from parents and 23 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. I considered 54 responses to the pupil survey and eight responses to the staff survey.