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Mrs Claire Hill
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hill

Short inspection of Christ Church CofE Primary School, Pennington

Following my visit to the school on 20 September 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 November 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since your very recent appointment you have wasted no time in getting to know the school. You have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and the priorities for improvement. You are resolute in your determination to further improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.

It would appear that the history of the school has not always been rooted in corporate decision making. As a consequence, senior leaders and governors do not yet have sufficient knowledge to determine with accuracy how well the school is performing. However, under your leadership there are positive signs that staff have a greater awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in provision and where further improvements can be made, although further work is required.

The school has a strong sense of community. Staff know each pupil extremely well and parents are very appreciative of the care and support their children receive. One typical comment from a parent was: 'All the staff work hard to create a family atmosphere.'

Pupils behave well. The vast majority of pupils are polite, kind and well mannered. On occasions, some pupils can present with challenging behaviour. Staff deal

extremely well with this and as a result learning is not disrupted and pupils make effective progress, particularly in English and mathematics.

When inspectors visited the school in 2014, leaders were asked to raise the achievement of pupils, particularly those that were disadvantaged. There is still work to be done to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as they can in key stage 1, where there is an inconsistent picture of achievement. Despite this, there is an improving picture in key stage 2 and you are aware of the need to check more frequently on the progress these pupils are making.

In addition, inspectors asked that the curriculum be improved so that pupils had a better understanding of life in modern Britain. The school has embarked on some work to develop the curriculum, but there is still further work to be done.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a culture of keeping pupils safe in school. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All staff are extremely committed to the well-being of each child. Staff know what to do if they are worried about a pupil or concerned about the behaviour of a member of staff. Every pupil I spoke to said they feel safe in school, because teachers look after them well. They say that bullying is rare and when it does occur it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff.

Safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. However, you are aware that policies and systems are not always as stringent as they could be and some of your written policies need to be reviewed. In addition, you have identified a range of additional training that would strengthen even further the safeguarding procedures in school.

Inspection findings

- Pupils achieve well at the end of key stage 2, particularly in writing and mathematics. Results in 2018 were above national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The performance of disadvantaged pupils is improving, and although there is an inconsistent picture of performance in some year groups, current work in pupils' books indicates that they are making effective progress, particularly in writing. Individual tracking of each pupil means that staff have a better understanding of the needs of individuals and senior leaders are now more aware of the need to check on the progress of these pupils as a group. Disadvantaged pupils are extremely well cared for. The school provides a range of activities and experiences for them, including music lessons and school trips.
- Leaders have identified the need to improve pupils' achievement in reading as achievement lagged slightly behind that of writing and mathematics in 2017. New resources have been purchased and pupils have access to high-quality texts. Pupils say they enjoy reading and enjoy using the school library. The expectations teachers have about what pupils can achieve are rising. For example, in one Year 6 lesson pupils were asked to glean information about characters that was just inferred in a text. Pupils were excited to make

suggestions and use a range of vocabulary to support their answers. As a result of these improvements, achievement in reading is beginning to rise.

- Until very recently, the leaders responsible for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities did not have all the information they needed to clearly assess the needs of each pupil. Consequently, the identification of these pupils was not always accurate. However, they have acted swiftly to change this. They are extremely knowledgeable and have ensured that a new tracking system identifies the needs of pupils quickly and effectively. They work closely with staff to make sure each pupil gets the help they need and this work is paying off. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities perform well.
- The curriculum beyond English and mathematics is not taught well. There has been some work to improve the planning of the curriculum, but this planning is in its infancy. Standards in subjects such as history, geography, art, and design technology are not as high as those in English and mathematics. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in these subjects are not high enough and knowledge and skills are often taught superficially. Rich and memorable experiences to bring the curriculum to life are too few. In contrast, teaching in physical education and music is much stronger and pupils achieve well in these subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- senior leaders have the skills and knowledge to carry out their roles effectively
- they continue to iron out inconsistencies in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils
- every aspect of the national curriculum is taught to a high standard.

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

Yours sincerely

Emma Jackson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders, and members of the governing body and I spoke to a representative from the local authority. I talked with pupils in a meeting and in class.

I took account of 16 responses to the online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, and nine responses to the pupil survey. I visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning and looked at their work in books. I reviewed information about pupils' progress and attainment. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation document and looked at safeguarding, including evaluating the impact of the school's procedures and policies to keep pupils safe.