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30 March 2017

Mrs Mary Lyle  
Headteacher  
Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Primary School, Brierfield  
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Brierfield  
Nelson  
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Dear Mrs Lyle

### **Short inspection of Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Primary School, Brierfield**

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 2017, 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 March 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Pupils flourish at Holy Trinity. They attain well and become self-confident, articulate citizens. Staff place great emphasis on developing pupils' emotions and their communication skills. Pupils benefit greatly from the wide range of thoughtful extra learning opportunities on offer, for example clubs for prayer, newspapers, cooking, craft and team games. Lessons are often made special, such as World Book Day, celebrated recently across a whole school week.

Pupils learn to respect different people and communities. They recognise what is special about their local area, as well as the United Kingdom. They learn that they each have special talents, for example by participating in the school choir at regional competitions. Pupils' learning and the strong Catholic values of the school are displayed very clearly throughout the building. Classrooms are attractive and well-organised places for learning. Pupils' behaviour and their attendance at school is excellent.

Holy Trinity is an outward-looking school that has strong links with other schools and the local authority. Leaders know the school in detail and have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and where further work is required. The school continues to improve and is set to develop even more strongly. You and the deputy headteacher work in synergy. You have successfully addressed the recommendation made previously by inspectors that the school develop the

teaching of mathematics. Pupils in the school are now much more able to solve mathematical problems. They engage well in mathematics activities.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved the teaching of pupils, including for the most able. Pupils are skilled learners, able to work independently as well as in a group with their peers. Over time, pupils are achieving more highly in their mathematics work than in the past. Nevertheless, the high expectations for pupils in the new national curriculum are prompting you to strive to improve teaching for the most able pupils further. This remains a school priority and one which is well planned and pursued by staff and leaders.

You identify that strengthening the work of middle leaders is a current improvement priority. During my visit, we looked together at the impact of middle leaders on the quality of geography activities. We agreed that the school needs to review the work of staff in geography in more detail to make sure that pupils' learning in this subject is as strong as it should be.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders review and improve safeguarding regularly. Governors check that policies and systems are fit for purpose and protect pupils. Training for staff and governors is regular and comprehensive. Records about pupils and families are detailed and of high quality. Leaders track and review concerns about pupils thoroughly. Links with other agencies in support of pupils are prompt and well considered. Leaders make sure that communication between staff and parents is frequent. Through class activities, assemblies and extra events, pupils develop a strong awareness of how to stay safe, for example when on or near roads, using mobile phones, or when surfing the internet.

### **Inspection findings**

- Over recent years, staff and leaders have focused their work extensively on improving mathematics. The subject leader gives clear and passionate leadership to mathematics in the school. She knows the work of the staff and pupils in detail and has a well-informed understanding of what good mathematics looks like. Senior leaders are equally clear in their oversight of mathematics. Teaching is skilled, confident and involves many valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills. In 2016, Year 6 pupils attained highly in mathematics and in other subjects. A large number of current Year 6 pupils are on track to do well in their mathematics this year. They are making strong progress in their learning.
- You make successful links with local secondary schools to deepen the learning of the most able pupils, for example so they master the knowledge and skills of mathematics. In school, extra help is given to groups of pupils, including the most able, so they have frequent opportunities to revisit and strengthen their learning across subjects. Across classes, pupils are confident. They understand what it takes to be a successful learner.

- In geography, pupils' learning is enhanced by good links with activities in English and history. Staff also make successful use of activities including 'Fair Trade Fortnight' and 'All Around the World Week' to develop pupils' geographical skills and knowledge. The subject leader is making increased checks on the quality of staff's work. The school's coverage of the national curriculum for geography is adequate. However, pupils' learning about a contrasting non-European country is not developed or reviewed well. Leaders do not check in enough detail how successfully teaching meets all pupils' needs. Consequently, the quality of some pupils' learning at key stage 1 and 2 in geography is variable.
- Leaders rightly identify that the early years is a key strength of the school. Provision is led skilfully. Teaching is exciting and inventive. For example, Reception children were inspired to hunt with torches and magnifying glasses for the naughty chick that had created such a mess that the classroom was declared a crime scene. Assessments of children's learning are thorough and staff use information well to decide next steps for children's learning. Staff teach children to read successfully and they make good use of fiction and non-fiction books to support children's learning. Staff organise and use the attractive Reception classroom and outdoor areas very well for teaching. As a result, children make good, and sometimes better, progress. They are prepared for their learning in Year 1.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' work in geography is always demanding enough to meet their needs and that reviews of the school consider in detail how well the national curriculum for geography is covered.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher to discuss your reviews of the school, your plans for improvement and information about pupils' progress. You and I observed teaching and learning in classes and spoke with some pupils. I spoke to a sample of staff about their work and reviewed responses from three staff to an Ofsted questionnaire. I spoke with five members of the governing body, including the chair. I spoke with a representative of Lancashire local

authority. I spoke with a range of parents as they brought their children to school and reviewed 13 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. I checked school records of checks on staff suitability to work with pupils. I checked a sample of school policies and information made available to parents on the school website.