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Mr C Wheatley  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Wheatley

### **Short inspection of Turton and Edgworth CofE/Methodist Controlled Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 22 January 2019, 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 January 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since taking up post in 2018, you have worked effectively with the local authority and the governing body to restructure and strengthen your leadership team. This has included the very recent appointment of a new deputy headteacher, who is working with you to bring about school improvement. Many parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey via free-text, Ofsted's online survey, spoke very positively about the improvements to the school that have come about recently. One parent, reflecting the views of many others, noted: 'The school has gone from strength to strength and in a clearly defined direction.'

You have the support of a well-skilled and dedicated governing body. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and know which areas need further development. Their clear Christian ethos shines out in terms of the vision, support and challenge that they provide for leaders.

Pupils hold their school in high regard. Those who I spoke with during the inspection said that the school was a positive environment where everyone worked hard. Pupils were proud of their achievements. Reflecting the views of others I spoke with, one pupil noted, 'We are intrigued by our learning. Teachers make it interesting.' Learning in this school is effective. This is evident in published performance information which shows that in key stage 2, the three-year average reading and mathematics attainment scores are currently in the top 10% for schools nationally.

Leaders promote pupils' well-being through a focus on healthy eating. The catering manager works closely with teachers to link some class topics to a study of food. For example, she has provided opportunities for pupils to experience Tudor banquets and Viking feasts. Such experiences engage pupils, help them to consider what they eat and enhance their learning.

In the previous inspection, inspectors asked leaders to provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English. We agreed to look at this as part of the inspection. The inspector also advised leaders to check that the additional help given to disadvantaged pupils is effective in narrowing the gaps in attainment between them and their classmates. There is much to celebrate in this area. Leaders ensure that a governor with specific responsibility for disadvantaged pupils offers appropriate support and challenge to leaders to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress. All teachers, and the special educational needs coordinator, have targets in relation to this group of pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points. In most aspects of reading, writing and mathematics their performance is broadly in line with that of other pupils.

Inspectors asked leaders to provide more opportunities for staff to observe excellent practice in other schools. Leaders have been successful in this area. The school enjoys close links with a broad range of other schools in the locality, enabling subject leaders and class teachers to share good practice. As a result, leaders have introduced new initiatives into school. For example, in early years, teachers are using a new and effective method of gathering evidence of children's learning across the curriculum, following leaders' observation of its use in other schools.

Finally, inspectors asked leaders to link targets set in the school's development plans to pupils' progress. This has been successful. For example, leaders' most recent plans include focused targets on developing pupils' outcomes in writing. These plans are helping to ensure that learning in this subject improves further to reflect the very high outcomes pupils achieve in reading and mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team ensures that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Records kept on the most vulnerable pupils are thorough. Leaders have worked effectively to improve the security of the school site and have undertaken a detailed audit to evaluate their procedures for keeping pupils safe. All pupils spoken with during the inspection said that they felt safe in school. They were keen to tell me about the different coloured badges that visitors wear and how this links to their freedom to move around school.

I met with a significant number of staff during the inspection. They demonstrated a clear understanding of the school's procedures to keep pupils safe and agreed that pupils' behaviour is a strong point of the school. The majority of the staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey reflected a similar view.

Governors receive regular and detailed training to ensure that they have a thorough and up-to-date understanding of safeguarding issues. Governors are a visible presence in school. As a result, they have a clear understanding of how the school's written policies are put into action. The majority of the parents who responded to parent view, Ofsted's online questionnaire, those who responded to the free-text questionnaire and those who spoke with me during the inspection were confident in leaders' ability to ensure that their children were safe, happy and well looked after in school.

## **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, I introduced a number of lines of enquiry to you. The first concerned the efforts made by leaders to ensure that a greater proportion of children achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. Leaders work closely with local nurseries to ensure that children get off to a strong start when they enter school. Leaders have also developed further their planning and assessment procedures to ensure that activities reflect the children's interests and challenge their thinking. A range of staff training, together with close monitoring and discussion of children's progress, has been successful. As a result, there has been a three-year increase in the number of children achieving a good level of development. In 2018, the number achieving this standard was higher than that seen nationally.
- Leaders and teachers work hard to ensure that reading is a central part of their curriculum. Teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to develop their love of reading and to engage them in meaningful reading activities. For example, pupils have enjoyed the opportunity of working with a poet. Additionally, pupils in Year 5 visit a local club to read to village residents. Such work has been highly successful in engaging pupils in reading and developing their skills. As a result, progress by the end of key stage 2 has increased over the last three years and current performance is now in the top 20% of schools nationally.
- However, leaders are aware that, while pupils performed well at the expected standard, there was a decline in pupils' attainment in reading at greater depth at the end of key stage 1 in 2017. This group of pupils, which comprised mainly boys, did not make the progress expected in key stage 1. Leaders have identified the reasons for this and have put appropriate support in place. As a result, these pupils are beginning to catch up. However, further focused work is necessary to ensure that the progress and attainment of this group of pupils increase more quickly, to reflect the potential they demonstrated by the end of the Reception Year.
- My final line of enquiry considered the impact of leaders' actions to improve pupils' progress in writing in key stage 2, to reflect more closely pupils' progress in reading and mathematics. Leaders are aware that progress in this subject, while in line with that seen nationally, is not as strong as that in reading and mathematics. Leaders are dealing with this issue effectively. Writing has become a whole-school focus in leaders' development planning. Pupils receive regular opportunities to practise their writing in subjects across the curriculum.

- Leaders ensure that there is a consistent approach to many aspects of the teaching of writing. In classrooms, teachers display the writing skills that they want their pupils to learn. Pupils receive exciting opportunities to write from real experiences. For example, pupils in key stage 2 visited an old tower to gain inspiration for writing a scary story. Teachers ensure that examples of high-quality writing are displayed both in school and in the local area as part of an initiative which teachers call the 'Edgworth Authors'.
- Leaders have also increased their focus on handwriting and the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling. This drive for improvement is showing signs of success. The school's most recent published performance information for pupils at the end of key stage 2 shows that attainment at the higher standard in writing and in grammar, punctuation and spelling is above that seen nationally. In key stage 2, teachers are working very hard to increase the progress of the pupils in their classes. However, leaders do not currently provide teachers with opportunities to share their many examples of good practice in writing with each other so that pupils' progress can develop further.
- Leaders have introduced a system to record the progress and attainment that pupils are making. This system is beginning to enable subject leaders and teachers to analyse closely the performance of all groups of pupils. However, their understanding is not yet fully embedded, resulting in some subject leaders and teachers not using it to best effect when planning for, and discussing, the progress that groups of pupils are making.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers and other staff provide high levels of support and challenge for the most able readers, especially the boys, to enable them to make the progress that they are capable of.
- teachers and subject leaders develop further their understanding of the school's assessment system, so that they are fully confident when analysing the progress and attainment of all groups of pupils
- they provide further opportunities for teachers in key stage 2 to share their good practice in the teaching of writing, to increase further the progress that pupils are making.

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 Blackburn with Darwen. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gill Pritchard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with pupils to gain their views of school life and their understanding of safety. I held meetings with you to discuss your school's evaluation of performance and safeguarding procedures. I met with the chair of your governing body and six other governors to consider aspects of school leadership and safeguarding.

I met subject leaders to discuss my key lines of enquiry and spoke with a local authority school effectiveness officer. I also met with parents and grandparents on the playground to discuss their views of the school. Finally, I met with a large proportion of the staff to discuss safeguarding, leadership and aspects of curriculum development.

I looked at pupils' progress in books and I reviewed documentation, which included your evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, the school development plan and a selection of subject action plans. I considered 112 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 111 responses to Ofsted's free-text survey, 26 responses to the staff survey and 82 responses to the pupils' survey.

I visited all classes, together with you, to observe pupils' learning. I reviewed a range of safeguarding documents including risk assessments, a recent safeguarding audit and the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.