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Mrs Sally Swain
Matlock Bath Holy Trinity CofE Controlled Primary School
14 Clifton Road
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Dear Mrs Swain

Short inspection of Matlock Bath Holy Trinity CofE Controlled Primary School

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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

There have been considerable changes to the leadership team since the last inspection. You became the headteacher in September 2015 and the current teaching staff have all been appointed since the last inspection.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are dynamic and enthusiastic about your role within the school and wider community. Your commitment is evident in all of your actions. You put families and children at the heart of all you do and have taken great strides to create a welcoming environment where parents and children feel valued and well supported. Parents feel the school supports their children well. Parents speak very positively about the school and your leadership. They are appreciative of the warm, caring culture that pervades and value the good communication between school and home.

You are an ambitious leader who has identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school accurately. You lead the school confidently and have the capacity to continue to improve the school. You have clearly communicated the school's priorities and built a small, hardworking, dedicated and confident team that shares your desire to improve the school. Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel valued because there are good systems in place to share ideas and plan together. They appreciate the opportunities they have to develop their professional practice and consider that their contributions to school improvement are recognised and worthy. Governors

are committed to the school and are passionate about their role in bringing about school improvement.

You promote pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development well. Your curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to explore other cultures and to participate in a variety of experiences. Two recent examples include a 'faith walk' in Derby, visiting different places of worship, and a visit to a science fair in Birmingham.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are happy, confident individuals who respect and get on well with each other. Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons and recognise that teachers know them very well individually and show them how to improve their work. One pupil commented that 'the school feels like one big family'. Pupils report that they find it easy to ask for help because their teachers are approachable and helpful.

Many areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been improved. There has been considerable work undertaken to improve the teaching of phonics. Pupils' attainment in phonics has improved so that the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in phonics by the time they leave key stage 1 is now above the national average. This has impacted positively on pupils' reading ability and also on their spelling. Pupils' work is celebrated and displayed well around the school. Pupils are now tracked in science in addition to reading, writing and mathematics and you report that you have plans to extend this to the foundation subjects from the start of the next academic year. Pupils' learning is well supported by teaching assistants in mixed-age classes.

The last inspection identified pupils' writing as an area for further improvement. You recognise that more work needs to be done to promote higher standards of writing. Initiatives, such as teachers providing more scaffolding and modelling of good writing for their pupils and a bigger focus on 'talk for writing', are starting to have an impact in pupils' recorded work. However, these initiatives have not yet been sustained over time or embedded securely enough to be borne out in the published results of national tests of progress and attainment at the end of key stage 2. These outcomes remained below outcomes found nationally. You also acknowledge that the presentation of pupils' work, particularly in key stage 2, is not as good as it should be.

You are carefully tracking the progress of pupils. Current assessment information shows that a large proportion of pupils are now on track to achieve standards appropriate for their age. Historic outcomes reflect poor progress in reading, writing and mathematics but this is due, in part, to previously inconsistent assessment practices at the end of key stage 1. The legacy of this inaccurate assessment is still working its way through the school as some of the cohorts affected are currently in key stage 2. Current assessment practices are robust and the school's assessments have been moderated and validated by the local authority. However, you rightly remain resolute in your desire to ensure that a greater proportion of pupils are working at the expected level and at greater depth in all subject areas by the end of

key stage 2.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that safeguarding processes are effective. Systems are simple and clear and staff understand their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety of all pupils. Records are appropriately detailed and well maintained. All staff have received up-to-date training and are aware of the risks to young people and the signs to look out for. As headteacher, you take the ultimate responsibility but have also ensured that other staff are able to act in your absence, should it be required.

Governors have been trained in how to fulfil their 'Prevent' duty and know the procedures for reporting concerns.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They are respectful of each other's views and values. Pupils report that incidents of bullying are extremely rare but are confident that staff would act quickly should any occur.

Inspection findings

- Published information about the progress pupils make suggests the school's performance is significantly below that found in most schools nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' expected attainment in writing and mathematics is also below that found nationally at the end of key stage 2 but it is in line for reading. The reasons for this include very small cohort sizes where the performance of one or two pupils can have a large effect on percentages, the higher than average numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in some cohorts and the legacy of historically inconsistent key stage 1 assessments. This belies the actual much more positive picture of good progress and attainment evidenced in school.
- The school has introduced many initiatives to improve attainment, and progress measures and current pupils' workbooks show that there is effective progression and coverage of the curriculum in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils now have more opportunities to use and apply their mathematics skills through problem-solving activities and developing pupils' reasoning skills is a focus at the start of every mathematics lesson. Writing sessions are well planned and are delivered in an exciting way. For example, Years 5 and 6 were studying 'The Arrival' by Shaun Tan. They had to build up their own narrative by interpreting the messages and symbolism of the illustrative text. They enjoyed doing so and wrote some detailed and mature sentences that they were keen to share with the rest of the class at the end of the lesson. There is an expectation that teachers will now provide more scaffolding and modelling of good writing for their pupils. This, as well as a stronger focus on more talking before they write, is starting to have an impact in their recorded work. Provision for reading has been improved through the purchase of new guided reading exercise books and improved rigour to the teaching of comprehension. Reading books, covering a wide range of genres have been bought and a home-school reading diary has been introduced.
- You recognise that these strategies need to become fully embedded to ensure

that recent improvements seen in pupils' recorded work are sustained over time and mirrored in pupils' test outcomes.

- Pupils are self-motivated and concentrate on their work well. However, work in key stage 2 pupils' books is not always neatly presented and is often marred by untidy handwriting and poor organisation.
- Progress, evidenced both in books and during classroom visits, indicates that the most able pupils are making good progress. However, not enough pupils are working at the highest levels of which they are capable at the end of key stage 2. This is because opportunities are missed to allow these pupils to access more challenging work sooner. For example, in one observation of teaching, the most able pupils could have completed more writing and without the scaffolding that the other pupils required. As a consequence, their progress slowed.
- Girls' attendance is below the national average and in the lowest 10%. You are tackling this issue through regular supportive contact with the families concerned. New whole-school initiatives, such as the introduction of 100% and 'great' attendance stickers and certificates, as well as specific personalised approaches for the individuals concerned, are starting to have an impact. As a consequence, girls' attendance is currently improved though not yet on a par with that of boys.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to embed and monitor strategies put in place to accelerate the progress of pupils so that a greater proportion are working at the expected level and at greater depth in all subject areas by the end of key stage 2
- the needs of the most able pupils are consistently met and that those pupils who have already grasped concepts are promptly set more challenging tasks
- expectations of standards for the presentation of pupils' work in key stage 2 are higher.

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

Yours sincerely

John Savage
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with pupils, staff and governors. I also spoke with a representative from the local authority. I had regular meetings with you and we visited classrooms together to observe teaching. I looked at pupils' work in a sample of their books in a variety of subjects and year groups. I considered 26 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 18 free-text responses from parents, additional verbal communications with parents at the start of the day and seven staff responses. I scrutinised a range of school documents, including records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and policies. I also looked at information published on the school website.