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Glynis Yates  
Executive Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Yates

### **Short inspection of St Leonard's CofE (C) First School**

Following my visit to the school on 15 May 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 February 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. In November 2016, the school became part of the Trinity Federation. It is one of three local schools in the federation. Since your appointment as executive headteacher in January 2017, you have set high expectations for what pupils can achieve. You are ably supported by your staff who share your vision. The changes you have brought to the school seek to instil a lifelong desire to 'love to learn, learn to love' in the pupils and staff. For example, the development of classrooms which have vibrant wall displays that motivate pupils in their learning. Pupils' work, in a range of subjects, is displayed attractively in classes and around the school. This boosts pupils' self-esteem and confidence as learners because they can see that they are valued.

One of the strengths of the school is the pupils' attitude to learning. Pupils work hard to support each other in lessons. They are polite, resilient and take pride in their school. You provide clear direction for the school's improvement. You have focused strongly on academic success, as well as providing opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of additional activities. This has been successful.

You appreciate that you serve a close-knit community and have created a learning environment that promotes your core values through strong links to the church and diocese. The majority of parents and carers are highly supportive of the school.

The leadership team is determined to do the best for all the pupils. You have

addressed the aspects for improvement that were identified in the previous inspection. You have improved the quality of teaching by making sure teachers seek out and take on board the very best practice in their own and other schools. You also make sure that teachers of older pupils follow the school's homework policy and set regular amounts of homework.

You, together with leaders and governors, have accurately identified the correct priorities for continued improvement. For example, you have recognised the need to improve pupils' spelling in all subjects and allow greater opportunities for pupils to write more extensively in subjects other than English. In this smaller than average-size first school, I recognise results can vary considerably because of the small numbers taking the tests.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team at St Leonard's has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a high level of trust and communication between staff and parents, who feel confident that their children are safe.

Leaders and governors monitor safeguarding concerns carefully. They make sure that all incidents are logged and followed up meticulously. Training is arranged for staff that ensures all have the necessary skills to identify issues early. The school helps families with their wider needs, including advice on who they should approach for support.

The pupils I spoke with told me that they can talk to members of staff if they are worried. They spoke confidently about how the school has taught them to stay safe when working online. Pupils referred to specific lessons they can remember where they were taught the many advantages, and sometimes disadvantages, of using the internet.

### **Inspection findings**

- I began by evaluating leaders' actions to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 1. In 2017, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who attained the expected standard and those who were working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. Their attainment in science, too, was below the national average.
- Leaders at all levels have correctly identified this as a priority and teachers have a stronger focus on this group of pupils' learning. Additionally, you have recognised that, over the past three years, the performance of the small numbers of disadvantaged pupils in the national assessments has been inconsistent and below the national average. Teachers and teaching assistants carefully track and check disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They use this information well to put interventions in place to meet the needs of pupils identified as falling behind. As a result, most of these pupils are making good progress.
- The next key line of enquiry focused on the teaching of phonics and the reasons

for an apparent decline in the phonics screening check outcomes over the past three years, even though outcomes have remained above the national figure. The school has recognised this concern and is ensuring that strong progress in reading for all pupils is a priority for leaders. Your sharpened focus on phonics is proving to be successful. Staff now track pupils' progress in phonics, identifying gaps in understanding at an early stage and putting in place appropriate support for pupils. On our visits to lessons, we saw pupils using their developing phonics skills well.

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the early years has fluctuated over the past three years, dipping slightly in 2017 to below the national average. In this small school, the achievement of only one or two children can have a significant impact on overall results. The 2017 cohort included several children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Leaders are ensuring that these pupils are receiving appropriate additional support in Year 1 so they make rapid gains to catch up in their learning. Scrutiny of work completed by children currently in the early years indicates that they are making good progress from their starting points.
- We found that most children start Reception with knowledge and skills that are broadly typical for their age. In our walk through the Reception class, we found that children listen well to adults and to each other. Children are very good at taking turns in play and sharing and have very good attitudes to work. For example, we saw children successfully doubling numbers and then proudly showing their work to the teacher.
- Leaders acknowledge indoor provision is good in Reception but outdoor equipment and provision are poorer, particularly a lack of space sometimes preventing children from making the progress of which they are capable.
- The last key line of enquiry looked at leaders' actions to ensure that attendance remains above the national average. This was because pupils' absence has slowly risen over the past three years. In this small school, the attendance of one or two pupils' can have a substantial impact on overall figures. Nevertheless, leaders have in place strategies to address this, including monitoring attendance information carefully, following up any causes for concern and effectively deploying key staff to support pupils, particularly if circumstances might make their families vulnerable. Current attendance data remains above the national average and is continuing to improve.
- The three schools in the federation have invested time and finances, including organising joint training programmes, sharing resources and providing opportunities for teachers to moderate each other's work, and are benefiting from the collaboration.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders increase opportunities for pupils to demonstrate in their writing their knowledge, skills and understanding in subjects other than English and mathematics
- outdoor equipment and provision in the early years are improved, allowing children to have even more opportunity to make progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Steven Cartlidge  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I held several meetings with you and other leaders. I met with four governors and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I considered the 13 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 10 written comments on the free-text facility. You and other leaders accompanied me on visits to classrooms. I talked to pupils about their learning and spoke to parents on the morning of the visit. I looked at pupils' books and listened to a range of pupils read as they worked in lessons. The 5 staff and 12 pupil surveys that were completed were used to gauge their opinion about working at the school. I also evaluated a range of school documentation, including school development plans, safeguarding records and information about current pupils' achievement.