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Mrs Charlotte Wilson  
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Dear Mrs Wilson

### **Short inspection of Trinity School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 2018 with Chris Hummerstone, Ofsted Inspector, 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 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is improving because of the clear leadership that you and the associate headteacher provide. You, together with governors, trustees, and the senior leadership team have an accurate understanding of the school and use this to identify strengths and priorities for improvement.

The very experienced and dedicated team of local governors and trustees has acted decisively to strengthen leadership within the school following a slight dip in outcomes last year. The revised leadership structure has a clear focus on developing and sharing first-rate teaching and learning and has reinvigorated the school. Together, you have worked hard to recruit, train and retain a dedicated and hard-working team of teachers and support staff. Morale is generally high, and staff recognise that the school is improving. A minority, responding to the Ofsted questionnaire, expressed the view that they would like more consistent support from leaders in dealing with behavioural issues.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the school has continued to focus on the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Revisions to target setting and greater consistency in the quality of teachers' feedback have been introduced in line with the school's policy. This has improved pupils' motivation and supports them to gain a greater awareness of their current progress and how to improve their work. Most pupils know their targets. The work in their books demonstrates that they make good progress over time, particularly in areas such as

humanities and science.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is appropriately well led and managed. Leaders ensure that teachers have access to information about individual pupils' learning needs. Using this information, the majority of teachers plan stimulating learning activities suitably pitched towards meeting the needs of the different groups of pupils in their class. Many teachers are very effective at using probing questions to encourage pupils' deeper thinking and promote a swift pace of learning. Leaders are aware that occasionally teaching is insufficiently challenging, particularly for the most able pupils. Leaders have also identified that, while differences in achievement are diminishing, disadvantaged pupils are not yet making the same consistently strong progress as their peers. Effective systems are in place to support teachers to improve their practice to challenge the most able and to improve provision for disadvantaged pupils.

The large majority of parents and carers responding to Parent View praised the school and would recommend it to other parents. Many were particularly appreciative of the high-quality pastoral care and extra-curricular activities that the school offers. However, a small minority expressed concerns in relation to behaviour and some teaching. Leaders and governors are rightly prioritising taking action to ensure that all teaching matches that of the best in the school. Overall, there is a sense of pride in Trinity School that is shared between staff, governors and pupils. Pupils and sixth formers confidently welcome visitors, are proud to share their achievements, and enjoy working with their teachers.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your team have ensured that the school has robust safeguarding arrangements and that there are well-understood systems in place to manage safeguarding requirements. The school's current safeguarding policy lacks depth and detail and so does not offer a sufficiently detailed point of reference for staff. However, all staff have appropriate and up-to-date training so that they can spot and then swiftly and appropriately deal with any problems that arise. Consequently, practice in the school is stronger than this policy suggests. There is a shared culture of vigilance, and leaders ensure that the school's records are carefully maintained and suitably detailed. Recognising that refinements could be made, leaders are implementing a new system to improve record-keeping still further.

Governors and trustees are knowledgeable about safeguarding. They ensure that this aspect of staff's work is given high priority and meets current requirements. Leaders are proactive, liaising with external agencies, and challenging where necessary, to ensure that timely and appropriate support is sourced to support vulnerable pupils.

Pupils report that they know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Leaders ensure that pastoral and teaching staff work closely together to ensure that effective bespoke support is provided for vulnerable pupils and those who need to catch up. Pupils told me that they know who to go to should they have any

concerns, and that they trust staff will support them to resolve them.

## **Inspection findings**

- During this visit, as well as evaluating safeguarding arrangements, inspectors focused on specific aspects of the school's provision including:
  - how well leaders have ensured consistently good teaching, learning and assessment across the curriculum
  - how effectively outcomes have improved by the end of key stage 4, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils
  - how effective leaders' strategies are for improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils
  - the quality of leadership and students' achievement in the sixth form.
- Leaders ensure that teachers receive training focused on improving assessment and using progress information to refine planning. Improved target setting has helped teachers motivate their pupils and communicate higher expectations. Consequently, standards of teaching are generally high across the school. Visits to lessons and checks of pupils' work demonstrate that across the curriculum there are examples of pupils responding well to teachers' feedback to refine, edit and improve their work.
- The overall quality of teaching is good. However, there are some inconsistencies in a minority of lessons across different subject areas. For example, in some areas there is still more to do to ensure that teachers' questioning is sufficiently stretching and challenging for the most able pupils. In other areas, pupils' books demonstrate that some teachers have not consistently challenged literacy, communication and mathematical skills sufficiently well across the curriculum.
- In 2016, by the end of Year 11, pupils had made average progress in mathematics and most other subjects and very strong progress in English. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils at this time was weaker in some areas. In 2017, overall progress was in line with national figures, and the differences between disadvantaged pupils and their peers diminished. However, pupils underperformed in religious studies, and disadvantaged pupils underperformed in humanities.
- Significant improvements have been made, particularly in the planning and provision for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders analyse performance information well to target raising achievement in key areas of underperformance. Currently all pupils, including the disadvantaged, are making strong progress. There is more to be done, however, to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make progress in line with other pupils nationally. In particular, disadvantaged pupils' writing skills and use of homework in key stage 3 are not as well developed as they should be.
- Leaders have implemented a wide variety of interventions and strategies to support disadvantaged pupils. Case studies identify that individuals make improved progress as a result. However, senior leaders have yet to develop sufficiently focused monitoring and clearer analyses of the ongoing progress

made by this group of pupils. Senior leaders' current reports, although highly detailed, do not give governors the clarity of view required to fully evaluate the impact of different support strategies and initiatives on offer.

- Strong leadership, including good liaison with feeder primary schools and parents, ensures very effective provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Leaders are passionate about wanting the best for every pupil, and relationships between staff and pupils are strong. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make strong progress in school. Many parents responding to Parent View were particularly appreciative of the extra support staff willingly give.
- Overall, pupils' attendance is in line with the national average and improving slightly. You have recognised that some vulnerable pupils and disadvantaged pupils had poor attendance rates in the past. Leaders together with the school's recently recruited attendance officer and in-house educational welfare officer are rightly focused on prioritising further improvements in this area. They have worked closely with families and outside agencies to support significant gains in attendance for individual pupils.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the leadership of the sixth form was described as requiring improvement. This is no longer the case. Strong leadership and good relationships with students have ensured improved provision in the school's small sixth form. Leaders' detailed analysis of performance information and attendance allows them to focus on student progress and refine the quality of teaching and learning where necessary. Consequently, outcomes have improved. In line with other analyses and evaluations, sixth-form leaders' reports to governors are not as focused and succinct as they should be.
- Current students in the sixth form feel well supported by their teachers, and particularly value the support they give. These good relationships, coupled with leaders' effective monitoring and mentorship, support students to make strong progress in their chosen courses. Leaders ensure that sixth formers are provided with a range of enrichment activities and gain opportunities to undertake leadership roles. Engaging in activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, mock trials, mentoring younger pupils and work experience supports students to develop a range of skills relevant to their future study or employment.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders' analysis of performance information underpins more streamlined and focused reports, supporting governors to challenge the impact of school initiatives and systems more robustly
- the differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers continue to diminish, particularly in relation to improving their writing skills and homework
- teachers consistently stretch and challenge all pupils, particularly the most able,

so that they make strong progress from their starting points

- literacy, communication and mathematical skills are promoted effectively across the curriculum in line with the best practice in the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for West Berkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Newberry  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors visited 13 lessons, two tutor times and an assembly to look at learning. Many of these visits were made jointly with leaders. We spoke with pupils in lessons and looked at a range of their work as well as meeting with pupils and sixth formers both formally and informally. Meetings were held with yourself, senior leaders and the chair of governors.

Inspectors scrutinised documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, and studied governing body records. Documentary evidence, including a range of policies, analyses of pupils' achievements and school improvement planning, was evaluated. During the course of the inspection, I considered 65 responses to the online Parent View survey, 90 replies to a pupil questionnaire, 55 responses to a staff questionnaire and the contents of an email received from a parent.