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Mrs Julia Summers
Headteacher
Holy Trinity Catholic Voluntary Academy
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Dear Mrs Julia Summers

Short inspection of Holy Trinity Catholic Voluntary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 28 February 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in April 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Although you are relatively new in post as headteacher, you have used your previous successful headship experience to identify and take swift effective action to bring about necessary rapid improvements across the school.

There have been significant staff changes, since the time of the last inspection and especially in the 18 months since the retirement of the long-standing headteacher. The clarity and accuracy of your school self-evaluation has enabled school leaders and staff to effectively implement wide ranging actions for improvement, including new systems for assessment, curriculum planning in mathematics and English and approaches to teaching. These have a rigorous and relentless focus on improving teaching and outcomes for all pupils. This is known and understood by all and has ensured the previous area for improvement, to increase the proportion of good teaching, is now being effectively addressed.

Governors are well informed and are using this information to work closely with school leaders to monitor and challenge the school to improve pupil outcomes.

In discussions, governors, staff, pupils and parents recognised there have been considerable recent improvements to pupils' learning and progress. Evidence seen in lessons, from talking to pupils and by looking at their work, shows that strategies

are having a very positive impact and pupils are now making good progress across the school. However, sometimes teachers do not ensure pupils are clear about the next steps they need to take to deepen their understanding. The school's latest assessment figures show that pupils are currently on track to achieve challenging targets by the end of early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2. Although, yourself and the leadership team know that the most able pupils need to receive more challenge and to have the opportunity to improve and deepen their understanding, to achieve above age expectations in-line with national averages.

Pupils consistently say that they are happy and enjoy school and all parents spoken to and those who responded to the Ofsted's online survey, ParentView, agreed with this. Pupils enjoy the wide range of exciting and engaging visits, visitors and active learning experiences, including forest school activities, Bikeability Balance sessions, aspiration week, and residential visits. A previous area for improvement was to improve pupils' use of ICT (information and communication technology) to enhance learning. The highly creative use of film by Year 6 pupils, in using green screen techniques to create powerful short stories and publish on YouTube, is an example of this being addressed.

The principles of love and dignity are central to the school's vision and are woven through all aspects of school life. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect and harmony across all aspects of the school day. Pupils are courteous and polite towards each other, adults and visitors. They are diligent in taking on roles to serve their school and community such as play buddies, monitors, school councillors, leading collective worship and fundraising.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding and the welfare of pupils are of the utmost importance at Holy Trinity. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You ensure that all the appropriate vetting checks take place before an adult works at the school. You have a strong system in place for staff to report any concerns they may have regarding a child's welfare. Your designated safeguarding lead makes sure concerns are accurately recorded and makes timely referrals to outside agencies so that pupils and their families receive the help and support they need quickly. All staff receive regular and appropriate training and demonstrate a good understanding of their responsibilities to ensure children's safety and well-being.

All parents who responded to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and who spoke to me on the day of the inspection and responded to a recent school questionnaire, said that their children were safe and well cared for in school. Pupils overwhelmingly say that they feel safe. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. You have provided opportunities for them to learn about issues such as e-safety and for Year 6 pupils to understand how to deal with such issues as peer pressure, as part of their preparation for secondary school. Pupils told me that bullying was very rare, but that adults listen to them and act quickly to sort any problems.

Inspection findings

- The school joined a multi-academy trust April 2014, The Aquinas Catholic Academy Trust. The trust is comprised of a secondary school and 5 primary schools. Yourself, the leadership team and governors understand the importance of working with others and make good use of opportunities for external moderation of assessment and for staff to work across schools to share and improve their teaching. You have also utilised the expertise of specialist staff from an established teaching school alliance particularly well to provide quality training and support for staff that has been central to recent rapid improvements.
- In 2016, pupils' outcomes at end of key stage 2 dipped in mathematics. However, you swiftly identified the reasons for this. Effective training and purchase of appropriate supporting equipment and teaching materials mean that teachers across the school are showing confidence and consistency in teaching mathematics and securing pupils' understanding of what each year group should know in mathematics. This was clear in pupils' books across the school and in lessons visited when, for example, Year 3 and 4 pupils confidently explained equivalence between quarters, eighths and sixteenths. In Year 6, the most able pupils were confidently able to find and prove missing dimensions and areas on a range of different types of triangle.
- In 2016, there were midyear changes to early years staffing. Leaders did not ensure that new staff were sufficiently supported in making end of year assessments. In 2016, there was an apparent significant fall in the number of children achieving expected standards for end of Reception year, particularly girls. Since joining the school full-time in September, you have ensured that training has been provided for all early years staff and that you are working closely with teachers and external specialists to ensure this year's assessment is accurate. You have ensured that early years practitioners in Nursery are building on strong care and interesting learning experiences, to focus more sharply on readiness for Reception. The impact of this was visible in our visits to early years classrooms with progression now evident and across learning. Particularly strong practice in Reception is leading to rapid progress in phonics and number, showing current children to be well on track for challenging targets and to be better ready for key stage 1.
- The leadership team understands the importance of closer tracking and timely adaptation of interventions for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils. Improvements to school assessment systems and rigorous tracking through regular review of pupil progress, is being used well to sharpen the identification of pupil needs. Interventions are more precise and are having a greater impact. The special needs co-ordinator was able to share clear evidence of improved progress for lower attaining pupils from their starting points.
- Governors and leaders have sharpened the monitoring and evaluation of how pupil premium is being spent and are ensuring that although there are relatively small numbers, all staff understand their responsibilities for vulnerable pupils. Actions, such as releasing teachers to have progress reviews with disadvantaged pupils, are strengthening relationships and teachers' understanding of barriers for individuals. Leaders know that the biggest barrier on entry to nursery for

vulnerable children is communication and language difficulties and have provided training and support from a speech and language therapist. Monitoring has shown improved early years planning and provision for language development. Expectations have been raised. Target setting has improved and intervention takes place as soon as children join the school.

- You and the governors are very committed to improving the attendance of disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils, particularly those who are persistently absent from school. The numbers relate to a relatively small number of pupils within the school and you understand the different issues for the families they represent. However, needs are not accepted as an excuse and support as well as challenge is offered – including weekly letters, individual meetings and attendance at meetings with other agencies. Nevertheless, governors and yourself understand that this will continue to be an aspect that requires ongoing robust action.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent rapid improvements are sustained and built upon consistently across all year groups.
- teachers consistently ensure pupils know what they need to do to improve and act upon feedback to deepen their understanding.
- teachers move pupils more swiftly on to challenge, especially the most able.
- leaders continue their rigorous work to improve attendance, to bring disadvantaged and vulnerable attendance in line with the national average.

I am copying this letter to the executive board, the director of education for the Diocese of Nottingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Nottinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mandy Wilding
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with parents at the start of the day and met with you, senior leaders, representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors, who is a director of the multi-academy trust, and the multi-academy trust school improvement adviser. I listened to pupils reading and spoke with a group of pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 about their school experience, as well as talking to pupils in classes and at playtime. You and I visited all classes and

examined pupils' workbooks from across the school. In addition, I scrutinised a range of the school's documents, including those relating to the progress of pupils, the school's improvement planning, its self-evaluation and documents relating to safeguarding. I took account of 33 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 21 responses from parents to the Ofsted free-text service. I also considered a recent parent questionnaire undertaken by governors. I also took account of 13 staff responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.