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Mrs Kerry Forrester
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Dear Mrs Forrester

Short inspection of Tarpoley CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 April 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection despite recent changes to staffing and an increase in pupil numbers. You have developed a committed group of leaders and staff who share your ambition to ensure that pupils achieve their own potential. All staff who responded to the survey during the inspection said that the school is well led and feel very well supported. Pupils are well prepared for their secondary education.

The school is a friendly and harmonious community. The school's Christian ethos underpins all that the school does. Relationships are excellent. Pupils are polite and well-mannered towards each other and adults. They enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average. Pupils' conduct around the school is exemplary. Their excellent attitudes to learning in lessons have a positive impact on their progress.

All parents spoken to during the inspection, and the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, said that they are happy with the education that the school provides. As one parent commented: 'The standard of teaching is excellent. Teachers deal with any incidents quickly.' Another parent said, 'My child has settled in well and is thriving.'

Governors bring a range of relevant skills and experiences to their role. They provide highly effective strategic leadership to the school. Governors have overseen the completion of a new building for key stage 2 pupils, outdoor facilities and

playground. This has improved the school environment. Governors are passionate about the school. One governor commented, 'We want pupils to be well-rounded, emotionally resilient and happy individuals.' Governors provide a strong level of challenge and encouragement to you and your leaders. Your local authority and school improvement adviser provide appropriate support where it is needed.

You have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. You check the attainment and progress of pupils very closely through regular pupil progress meetings with leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and staff. Pupils who are falling behind are well supported.

Pupils' outcomes have improved over time. Children in the early years get off to a good start. In 2018, the proportion of pupils achieving the Year 1 phonics screening check was above average. Pupils' progress in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 was significantly above the national average. The proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard and greater depth in writing at the end of key stage 2 was above the national average in 2018.

At the last inspection, you were asked to improve pupils' progress in writing, so that their standards in writing at least match those they achieve in reading and mathematics. Teachers give pupils opportunities to apply their writing skills in subjects other than English. Pupils' spelling and grammar have improved throughout the school. However, inspection evidence and your own evaluation indicate that further work is required to embed the improvements in writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that the school is a safe and welcoming place. As a result, there is a strong culture of safeguarding around the school. Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and know what to do if they have any concerns. You have a thorough knowledge of each child. Detailed records show that any recorded concerns are followed up promptly. You and your two deputy designated safeguarding leads work effectively with external agencies, where appropriate, to protect vulnerable pupils.

Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after. They told me that instances of bullying are rare. Pupils feel that adults are approachable and are confident that they will help them, if they have a problem. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Staff, parents and carers agree that pupils are safe at school.

Inspection findings

- My main line of enquiry for this inspection related to the pupils' progress in writing. This was identified as an area for development in the previous inspection report. You have introduced a whole-school focus on writing which is bearing fruit. Progress was broadly in line with the national average at the end of key stage 2 in 2018. Leaders have invested in good-quality texts to develop a love of

writing. Teachers model good speaking skills. They use 'hooks' to capture pupils' ideas and imagination in readiness for writing. Teachers also give pupils the chance to apply their writing skills across many subjects, for example in science, where pupils wrote about the human digestive system. This is helping them to develop their subject-specific vocabulary and writing stamina. The focus on spelling, handwriting and writing at length is having a positive effect on the progress of current pupils. My review of your assessment information and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that attainment and progress in writing are improving. However, the work to improve writing is not fully embedded. Leaders have plans in place to improve the progress of current pupils.

- I also looked at how effectively teachers challenge the most able pupils. You have raised teachers' expectations of all pupils. You provide effective training for staff and ensure that teachers share good practice with each other. As a result, teachers' subject knowledge has improved. They use questioning to challenge pupils to think deeply and develop their knowledge and understanding. Inspection evidence shows that the most able pupils are making strong progress.
- Another focus for the inspection was the effectiveness of actions taken by leaders to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The number of disadvantaged pupils who attend the school is very small and varies across different year groups. This means that comparisons with national averages are not appropriate. Leaders know the barriers to learning that these pupils face. Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. You ensure that they receive additional teaching and support to help them with their learning. As a result, current assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils are now catching up across the curriculum.
- Leaders regularly review and develop the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about British values, such as democracy and respect for differences. They have good opportunities to develop their knowledge and expertise in geography and history through memorable real-life experiences such as trips and residential visits. Pupils' written work is celebrated in classrooms and corridors around the school. They enjoy the many extra-curricular activities, such as sports and after-school clubs.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they consolidate and extend the strategies in place to further improve pupils' achievement in writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Ahmed Marikar
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, other senior leaders and middle leaders. I met with four members of the governing body, including the chair. I held telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and your school improvement adviser. I met formally with pupils and also spoke with other pupils during breaktimes. I visited a number of classes, where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils.

I spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school. In addition, I took account of 60 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including 57 free-text responses. I also considered the views of 32 staff and 81 pupils through Ofsted's online questionnaires. A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' attainment and progress. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies about keeping children safe, records of training, safeguarding checks and attendance information. I also undertook a review of the school's website.