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Mrs N Maidment
Baynards Primary School
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Dear Mrs Maidment

Short inspection of Baynards Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 February 2016 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 2011.

This school continues to be good.

You and your staff have sustained and improved the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have established a culture of reflection and high expectations based on very positive relationships between staff and pupils. You and your team's determination to ensure that the school's ethos of 'be the best you can' is reflected in pupils' rising achievement. Staff are proud to work at the school and, as a result, morale is high and there is a good team spirit.

The school's values, which include being fair, honest, courageous and successful, are modelled by staff and respected by pupils. These values clearly underpin the school's work and help pupils to grow in confidence. You have all worked together to create a vibrant school community where pupils are happy, feel safe, enjoy their learning and make rapid progress. Pupils settle quickly to their work, are keen to show what they can do and are proud of their achievements.

Given the many changes that have taken place to staffing and governance since the last inspection, you are right to be proud of the school's achievements. You have harnessed the talents of staff to sustain improvements in teaching, showing determination for this school to become an outstanding school. You are supported well by your team and governors in this endeavour. The school demonstrates the capacity to improve by tackling the remaining issues, such as further improvement in pupils' writing.

Robust monitoring of pupils' progress and the identification of any pupils who are at risk of falling behind have ensured that attainment in English and mathematics has risen. This was an aspect highlighted for improvement at the previous inspection. Teachers now provide a variety of tasks matched well to pupils' abilities. Pupils are happy to challenge themselves, choosing to self-select the level of work appropriate to their need and ability. This aspect of your work has been particularly effective in encouraging pupils to reflect on their own learning in an environment where they know they will be challenged. One pupil in a mathematics session said, 'I will stay on the "practise table" for a while until I feel ready to go the "investigation table", which won't be long because I can tell I am getting more confident'. Although this is but one example, it was evident in both pupils' books and the lessons observed that this is routine throughout the school. Even in the Reception class, children have 'challenge books' with daily tasks to help them think about their learning.

Children in the early years class are provided with a range of activities in a bright, welcoming and stimulating environment both inside and outside the classroom. You and your early years leader have worked hard to develop this area of the school, which was identified as an action point in the previous inspection. Leadership of the early years provision is strong. A large proportion of children enter the school with development that is below that normally expected. Regular checking and changing of provision to suit the needs of each class of children have improved the outcomes.

Since the previous inspection, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is broadly in line with the national average. The majority of children make good progress from their various starting points, especially in communication and language. The introduction of a new online system to record children's progress has been largely successful in ensuring that every opportunity is taken for all children to make as much progress as they can. The system gives staff a very clear indication of the gaps in each child's development and shows how teachers are addressing them.

The early years leader is rightly pleased that parents have enthusiastically embraced the system. Almost without exception, parents regularly update staff about their children's achievements at home. For example, one parent shared a photograph of her child playing Scrabble with her. These individual moments of celebration are shared with all children, who are growing in confidence safe in the knowledge that staff and parents are collectively supporting them in their learning. However, not all staff use the online system as regularly as others so that, on occasion, children's progress slows. Parents are encouraged to come into the classroom to see how they can help their child's development. For example, teachers demonstrated how phonics is taught and how this skill helps children with their reading. As a result of this very good relationship between home and school, children settle quickly, like to come to school and develop in confidence.

Almost all of the current members of the governing body are new to their roles. However, they are keenly aware that there had not been enough challenge of leaders, as identified in the last inspection report. Governors have undertaken an audit to identify where there are gaps in governors' skills, knowledge and understanding. As a consequence, there have been some key appointments of governors experienced in, for example, education and finance. This is already paying dividends in the robustness of monitoring of the effectiveness with which additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent, for example.

Governors are regular visitors to the school. They monitor closely the school's work, as set out in the detailed plan for improvement, and challenge very effectively leaders' actions and the impact that those actions have directly on pupils' achievement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that current safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are of high quality. A governor with experience in education checks on the school's single central register, which is updated regularly. She meets you routinely and is aware of any issues that the school may encounter. Attendance of the most vulnerable pupils has been a high priority for the school. The actions that you have taken have been effective so that, in the autumn term, the attendance of the identified groups of pupils was in line with that of their peers, within a picture of overall improvement. Leaders are meticulous in ensuring that behaviour and safeguarding policies are up to date, reflect recent requirements and that all staff know what to do if they have any concerns. For example, all staff and pupils took part in the recent 'internet safety day'.

Pupils who completed the online questionnaire and those I spoke to feel safe and well cared for, know how to keep themselves safe and enjoy coming to this 'fantastic, friendly school' where bullying is extremely rare. Parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, unanimously reported that their children are happy and safe. As one parent put it, 'Baynards is an excellent school and I would highly recommend it to any new parents'.

Inspection findings

- The leadership team models good leadership skills so that staff taking on new responsibilities are supported well. This is shown in the way that the leadership of mathematics and early years provision quickly complemented the established leadership of English. As a consequence, leaders identify and plan well for emerging priorities and take appropriate action to address them, as seen with regard to problem-solving skills in mathematics and spelling skills in English. This has resulted in an increase in pupils' skills and how they apply them in their everyday work.

- An effective system to track teachers' performance is well established and takes into account the impact on pupils' achievement. Staff are, therefore, well aware of any gaps in pupils' learning and address these quickly, with effective support for individual and groups of pupils. Information provided to the governing body about pupils' achievement is comprehensive. This means that governors are increasingly better placed to challenge leaders' decisions and actions.
- The school's emphasis on accelerating pupils' progress in English and mathematics has resulted in higher proportions of pupils making more than expected progress in mathematics and reading in almost all year groups. Writing, however, lags behind. You have prioritised this area for continued improvement with the aim of all pupils identifying themselves as 'authors'. Professional authors have visited the school, which has clearly raised the profile of reading, supported by the introduction of 'Big Boss Readers' in each class.
- Pupils are developing their independence well throughout the school. They welcome the challenge that teachers give them to think about their learning. They are very familiar with the system that is championed throughout the school to help themselves using 'clues' and 'prompts' from other pupils or from around the classroom. Pupils are keen to try, reflect on their own learning and support others when they are stuck. They respond well to teachers' and other adults' feedback; as seen in their books, they know what they have done well and what they can do even better. 'Profiles' with their individual targets are used regularly by pupils when they are doing their work and they say that these also help them to know that they 'have been successful'.
- The new curriculum is developing well throughout the school. Themes such as 'chocolate', 'splish, splash, splosh' and 'bugs, bugs, everywhere' interest and inspire pupils. The many visits to, for example, the Tower of London, Sea Life Centre and East Mersea, complement the themes well and are very popular with pupils. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is promoted very well, alongside British values. For example, pupils know the meaning of 'respect' and understand why this is important in their school and the wider community. One young pupil told me that he really enjoyed a visit to read to older people in a local residential home. 'It made me feel very pleased to read with them because they said they really enjoyed it. It made me very proud'.
- The small size of each year group means that there are fluctuations in pupils' attainment year on year. Overall, the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 has been broadly in line with the national average. The pupils in Year 6 in 2015 made more than expected progress in writing and mathematics. Evidence of current pupils' attainment shows a trend of improvement in mathematics and reading. Writing remains relatively weaker, as confirmed by the school's own assessment information and work in pupils' books.

- Attainment of the small numbers of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 has risen since the last inspection and remains broadly in line with the national average. The progress of pupils currently in the school is rapid in reading and mathematics but less so in writing. Teaching assistants support pupils very well, especially those with additional needs. As a result, all pupils make broadly the same progress relative to their starting points.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is in line with the national average. A large proportion of children enter the early years with development that is below that typical for their age. This is particularly so in speaking, listening and understanding. The early years leader has been instrumental in establishing good links with all providers and parents. As a result, parents are very happy with the way their children settle and feel that children make good progress. Children with additional needs, who are growing in number, are supported well by adults. Children are, therefore, well prepared for Year 1.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress in writing increases throughout the school
- opportunities for children to practise their communication skills in the early years provision are regularly planned and all adults feed into the school's assessment system.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Brock
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors and a group of pupils. I spoke with a representative from the local authority. I looked at views expressed by parents on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and those given by staff and pupils in the online surveys. I scrutinised the school's own assessment information and work in pupils' books with you and your leaders. I visited all classes, many of which were with you, and spoke with individual pupils about their work. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's plans for improvement and evaluation of its performance, minutes of meetings and all relevant documentation regarding safeguarding, including the single central record.