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Bonsall CE (A) Primary School
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Dear Ms Murhall

Short inspection of Bonsall CE (A) Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 September 2015, 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.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There is no sense of complacency about standards at the school and all pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves. This approach is highlighted by your reaction to a disappointing set of Key Stage 2 results in 2014. In response to this, you have ensured that leaders and governors receive up-to-date information about pupils' performance so that immediate action can be taken. This has contributed to improved Year 6 results in 2015 and accelerated rates of progress for pupils in other classes.

Leaders and governors have acted on the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. Pupils of all ages consistently make at least expected progress and often more than that expected for their age. Teachers use thoughtful questions to deepen pupils' understanding and increase their knowledge. This is reflected in the quality of pupils' writing across a range of subjects and in their ability to express themselves verbally. Leaders have also taken note of the outcome of a more recent science subject inspection, by placing lessons into a context that makes learning more relevant to pupils. This is evident in mathematics books, which show many opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge in problem-solving. Leaders have already done much to improve the quality of teaching, and particularly questioning in lessons, and this is helping pupils to make good progress.

Leaders and governors show their determination that all pupils will achieve to the best of their ability by closely monitoring pupils' progress. This includes the progress being made by particular groups of pupils such as those who are disabled or have

special educational needs, those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who are more able. Governors hold school leaders and teachers to account for every child. However, while the school's self-evaluation is accurate, the improvement plan is not as detailed as it should be and some policies and documents are not updated regularly.

The school is a buzzing hive of activity, with pupils eager to talk about what they are learning. Our visit to Class 2 was a good example of this, with pupils from Year 3 and 4 excitedly sharing their knowledge of the similes they were using to describe different animals in their writing. Activities and lessons have a clear purpose, whether it is the introduction of a 'forest school' or whole-class brass and ukulele lessons, with the aim of developing physical, social and artistic skills. Pupils really value these opportunities and, by Year 6, they are able to talk knowledgeably and very confidently about what they have learned as they have passed through the school. They are particularly positive about the close links with a school in inner London and the exchange visits that take place, not only understanding what they learn from a visit to the capital, but also what children from the city learn from visiting a small rural community.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors place the highest priority on keeping children safe. This is reflected in pupils' comments, not only about how to stay safe in their local environment but also how this was different when they visited London. Year 6 pupils can also explain how they helped visiting pupils from London to adapt to life in a small rural village and how they taught their guests about the different lifestyle and challenges they encounter. Pupils are confident that adults will almost always deal with their worries quickly and effectively. They also talk maturely about how they can deal with disagreements and so are usually able to resolve these themselves. A number of parents have specifically chosen to send their children to the school, travelling some distance, because of its reputation in this field. Pupils benefit from the depth of knowledge that staff possess about their individual circumstances and the positive relationships between staff and parents.

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. They are very aware of the risks that pupils might face, now and in the future, and show great vigilance at all times.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of further development. Improvement priorities are discussed with governors, who have a firm grasp of their role in improving the school and make regular visits to increase their understanding of its day-to-day life. They complete written records of their visits that are shared with you and at meetings of the governing body. These records, like some of the

improvement planning documents, are not precise enough to hold individuals to account for their actions or to identify clearly future actions.

- Governors are increasingly effective in holding you and your team to account for pupils' progress, attainment and personal development. This has improved, particularly since 2014, with the introduction of a new pupil tracking system that is shared with, and understood by, governors. They use this information and the school's performance management arrangements effectively, setting aspirational targets and expectations for staff. However, records of the good work of the governing body in challenging school leaders and shaping the school's future are not detailed enough to show the impact they are having.
- Leaders and governors formally review pupils' progress each term. Additionally, the size of the school and the good quality of communication between members of staff ensures that any drop in pupil performance is addressed almost immediately.
- Leaders have correctly identified that the quality of teachers' questioning is a strength. During a mathematics lesson in Class 1, for example, the teacher used skilful questioning techniques to check if pupils really understood subtraction and the use of addition to check their results. In another example, Year 6 pupils talked about how teachers made them use mental calculations when creating a working model of a volcano in science week.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. This is clear from the responses to Parent View and the school's own parental satisfaction survey. The vast majority of parents believe that the school is a safe place for their children and that you and your staff listen to them. Parents and carers are eager to talk about the difference they believe the school has made to their children as a result of its values and character.
- Pupils behave well around the school and at different times of the day. They are very willing to talk about their work and explain what they are learning. By Year 6, they are able to have very well developed conversations about their likes and dislikes, what they would improve about the school and the impact of their learning on their lives outside school. They are very well prepared for life beyond their primary school. The school's relationship with another school in inner London does much to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Leaders and governors understand their responsibilities in ensuring that pupils are kept safe from harm, including through teaching about issues such as e-safety and the dangers of radicalisation.
- All but a few pupils across the school make at least the progress expected for children of their age. Where pupils fall below this, teachers know the reasons why and provide additional support. In 2015, all children leaving the

Reception year had reached a good level of development. This included some children who had entered the school with communication and literacy skills that were below those usually expected of children of a similar age. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils had continued to make good progress, particularly in mathematics and reading. By the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils had made at least expected progress in all subjects, with the proportion making more than expected progress being higher than that seen nationally.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- important documents, such as policies and improvement plans, have more detail so that:
 - named individuals can be held accountable for their role in raising standards
 - there are clear, precise and accurate records that provide strong evidence of the good work being done by leaders and governors

- pupils, especially those who are more able, are further stretched by the work they are set in school.

Yours sincerely

Stephen McMullan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met you, your deputy headteacher, four governors, parents, grandparents and all of the Year 6 pupils. We visited all three classes, spending a short time in each, and looked at a sample of pupils' work together. We also considered responses of parents from Parent View, comparing these to the school's own parental questionnaire. I looked at a range of documents including an evaluation of the school's performance and plans for further improvement, attendance records, minutes from governing body meetings, records of governors' visits to the school, information on how the pupil premium is spent and a number of policy documents, including those for child protection and special educational needs.