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Jonathan Mason
Belton Lane Community Primary School
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Dear Mr Mason

Short inspection of Belton Lane Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 March 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.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You lead a team who work very effectively together to continue to ensure that pupils are well-cared-for and make good progress through the school. Staff were very keen to tell me how, regardless of their role, they continually share information to improve what they do. They feel that, while setting high expectations, you are considerate of their well-being and help them to continually improve their skills and effectiveness. As one member of staff described it, 'We are moving forward together. There is a shared vision here. We feel valued and we feel part of it.' Parents I met at the end of the school day were also extremely positive about the school, confirming that their children make good progress due to high-quality teaching.

Classrooms are orderly working environments where pupils listen and respect the adults who help them. Wall displays, as well as being bright and lively, help children by providing them with information they need to improve. Teaching is good in all key stages, with the most-able pupils given difficult work that challenges them. Skilled and dedicated teaching assistants make a very good contribution in supporting those pupils who need to catch up. Pupils are happy and behave well around the school. The curriculum teaches them to be respectful to others, and pupils I met explained that it is a good thing that everyone is different. They are proud to be pupils at Belton Lane and are welcoming to others who join the school from other countries. They learn about other faiths and cultures and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils make good progress from starting points that are below or well below those found typically in children of the same age. A much higher proportion of pupils have special educational needs or disability, compared to that which is found nationally. Pupils are also writing with increased fluency and imagination. For example, Year 1 pupils had been retelling the story of Cinderella, including phrases such as 'the prince found a sparkly glass slipper'. Year 2 had composed powerful imagery about nature, with one pupil writing, 'The sun is an orange dot sailing across the calm, turquoise sea. It is a cherry red football kicked high into the winter sky.' However, pupils' progress in writing is not as fast as in reading or mathematics. This is because pupils do not yet receive sufficient opportunities to write at greater length.

You have attended effectively to most of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The governing body now has an accurate view of the school and understands information about pupils' outcomes. You and governors have produced a rigorous self-evaluation document that sets out the strengths of the school. You have reflected on those areas where the school needs to improve further and have produced an effective plan to address these. In response to the previous inspection report, you have reduced the proportion of pupils of compulsory school age who are persistently absent to below the national average.

You have appointed new subject leaders for English and mathematics. Although they understand their roles clearly, and have already examined pupils' work, they have not yet had an opportunity to see the quality of teaching in different classes for themselves. They also do not yet have a sufficiently detailed understanding of the performance of different groups of pupils. This means that these new leaders are not yet fully effective in being able to support other teachers and ensuring that any pupils making slower progress catch up as quickly as possible.

The information on the school website about governors, the pupil premium and the physical education and sport funding does not currently meet the requirements set by the government. Leaders need to address this quickly so that parents and visitors are given the information they need.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a clear culture of vigilance at your school. Staff are well trained, and informed promptly about areas of new concerns, such as radicalisation. Adults I spoke with during my visit all knew that, in order to protect pupils, they must report any concerns, however slight, quickly. They were fully aware of the procedures to do this, along with the warning signs of possible abuse.

Pupils I met during my visit told me that they felt safe in school, and that adults dealt quickly and effectively with any concerns or any rare instances of bullying or name-calling. They explained to me how the school teaches them how to keep safe online, along with risks of things such as electricity, roads and strangers.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Examples of case files I looked at during my visit show that you do not hesitate to refer to external agencies, including social care, wherever you need to. I saw good evidence of leaders working with agencies to support vulnerable pupils.

Inspection findings

- You are providing effective leadership to the school, reflecting on its strengths and working with governors to address any areas where the school needs to improve further. You lead a united team of staff who know the school's priorities and work effectively. The long-standing Chair of the Governing Body also knows the school well and shares your high expectations. Governors are not afraid to ask you searching questions and hold you to account for the outcomes of pupils.
- Parents I met at the end of the school day were extremely positive about all aspects of the school. They confirmed that they could approach any member of staff if they have an issue, and they receive a good level of information about their child's progress. Parents believe that their children are safe in school and that you, as headteacher 'always have the best interests of the kids at heart'.
- Good teaching begins in Reception, where adults take care to use the language of learning when they talk to children. They encourage children to 'have a go' on their own first, talk through what they have done and ask adults how they can improve things. Because of good modelling, children start to understand how to become successful learners and begin to develop their ability to do things for themselves. Staff ensure that the outdoor area is well used. I saw a group of children enthusiastically cooperating, making walls with play bricks and using sand for imaginary cement in order to fix the leaks in the play house. Good teaching continues across the school, with teachers assessing pupils accurately and providing them with challenging work that is well matched to their ability. The local authority have moderated teachers' assessments of pupils to ensure that they are accurate.
- Historically, pupils have entered the school with levels of skills below or well below those typically found in pupils of the same age. However, the proportions of pupils entering the school at more typical levels have begun to increase. While smaller proportions than those found nationally have left the early years in the past with a good level of development, and attainment at Key Stage 1 has been below average, progress has been good. Progress continues to be good, and standards are rising. Staff expect pupils in Reception to attain broadly in line with the national average this summer and in Key Stage 1, closer to national averages.
- The large number of pupils' exercise books that I looked at during my visit confirm that pupils' progress is good overall in all subjects.

- Last year, pupils in Year 6 made significantly more progress in reading and mathematics than others did nationally. Progress in writing, though good, has been slower in recent years and, as a result, pupils have attained less well in this subject. Though this is improving, teachers are not accelerating progress in writing as much as they could. This is because they are not giving pupils opportunities to practise writing longer pieces of work often enough.
- You and senior leaders spend the pupil premium money wisely. Published information shows that, as a result, the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers, and those nationally, are narrowing convincingly by the time these pupils leave the school. While gaps for pupils in Key Stage 1 widened last year, information you provided shows that progress for pupils in Year 1 and 2 is now good overall. In addition, where particular pupils are not making the progress they need to, staff are giving them intensive support to catch up.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Those I spoke with during my visit say that teachers are caring and provide them with interesting lessons. They told me that if they do not understand something adults explain it to them again in a different way so that they can learn it. The most-able pupils also say that staff give them more challenging work that makes them think deeply. They enjoy keeping healthy and enjoy the sporting and extra-curricular activities that the school provides.
- At the time of the last inspection, there were a small minority of pupils who were persistently absent from school. The parent partnership coordinator, employed by you, has worked effectively with families where a child's absence is a concern. You have introduced a trophy for pupils to celebrate their good attendance, which is making them keen to come to school each day. There is also a new policy on attendance that makes clear that, unless there are genuine reasons or illness, pupils must not miss school. As a result, attendance has improved and the number of pupils persistently absent has reduced, and is currently below the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the new subject leaders for English and mathematics
 - develop a detailed understanding of the performance of different groups, so that any groups making slower progress can be quickly supported
 - have opportunities to see teaching across the school so that best practice can be shared.
- progress in writing is accelerated by giving pupils more practice in writing at length for a range of purposes

- the school website is fully compliant and provides parents with the information needed.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Roary Pownall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the Chair of the governing body and the subject leaders for English and mathematics. We visited all classes to observe teaching and learning. I looked at pupils' work across the school. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and as they moved around the school, and met with a group of them at breaktime. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. However, I met with parents at the end of the school day to gauge their views. I read a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, your school development plan and information on outcomes for pupils currently in the school. I visited the breakfast club, which is maintained by the governing body, to check that pupils were safe there. I studied information related to attendance, anonymised examples of teachers' appraisal and examined safeguarding records and policies.