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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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21 June 2016

Mr John ap Robert Jones
Headteacher
Bourton-on-the-Water Primary Academy
School Hill
Bourton-on-the-Water
Gloucestershire
GL54 2AU

Dear Mr Jones

Short inspection of Bourton-on-the Water Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 17 May 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education since the school converted to academy status.

You provide strong and purposeful leadership, together with a clear vision and an absolute belief that every child must receive the very best education. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about your leadership and that of your deputy headteacher. They share your commitment and determination to continue to improve the school. Since the school became an academy in February 2013, you have driven improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, standards continue to rise and pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Your self-evaluation is accurate and identifies the school's many strengths as well as areas for improvement. You are never complacent and always seek to improve the quality of education provided. The previous inspection identified the need to ensure that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and spelling in Years 1 and 2. Your drive to improve the teaching, learning and assessment of phonics (sounds that letters make), introduced in September 2015, is resulting in pupils making faster progress than in previous years. Teachers are working closely together to plan lessons in small steps which build and deepen pupils' learning. The school is predicting outcomes in the Year 1 phonics check to be above the national average. This builds on the improving trend on previous years.

This is a highly inclusive school which values all pupils as individuals. You and your leaders check pupils' academic and personal progress each term. You know in detail how much progress pupils make. Together with your special educational needs manager, you identify pupils at risk of falling behind or those whose progress has slowed. Timely and appropriate interventions ensure that they catch up. Children who arrive at the school with little or no English are welcomed and well supported. As a result, these pupils make good progress and rapidly gain the confidence to be able to read aloud and write using increasingly complex sentences. The most able pupils are stretched to achieve even higher standards. This meticulous approach is supporting all pupils, including disadvantaged and most-able pupils, to achieve well.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your governors have created a very strong culture of keeping pupils safe and secure. All staff have received the training they need to be able to recognise and act on signs of risk or harm. They are knowledgeable about the school's procedures to follow if they have concerns about pupils' safety. Records kept are detailed and used effectively to plan the support needed, especially for your most vulnerable pupils. Consequently, pupils say that they trust their teachers and feel safe at this school. Parents are extremely positive about your work to provide a safe and inspiring place to learn.

The governors are rigorous in their approach to safeguarding pupils. They receive the appropriate training to enable them to carry out their role effectively. Minutes of meetings confirm that pupils' safety is given the highest priority. For example, regular reviews of the school site ensure that the school is kept secure. In addition, governors carry out all recruitment checks carefully before staff begin working at the school. All staff and governors have a good understanding of the government's 'Prevent' duty as a result of recent training. This has given them a good understanding of how to protect pupils from the risks posed by extremism.

You and your leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements, policies and procedures are fit for purpose and successfully implemented.

Inspection findings

- School leaders continually review their work and identify areas where further improvement can be made. Your detailed action plans set out your intended outcomes with agreed timescales. This approach has ensured that standards have continued to rise since the school became an academy in February 2013. Pupils are very proud of their school and demonstrate confidence and enjoyment in their learning. The school's values underpin its work. Pupils expect to be challenged and amazed. They show respect and enjoy their learning.

- The school sits at the heart of the community. The overwhelming majority of parents strongly agree that the school looks after their children well and is responsive to any concerns. The parent–teacher association is effective in bringing the whole school together at its events.
- Staff, without exception, are very positive about the school. You have successfully managed a number of staff changes and new appointments, thus creating a strong team spirit. Teachers value greatly the high priority given to training and feel very well supported in their role. They understand your high expectations and have risen to the challenge of implementing the agreed approaches to teaching mathematics and English. As a result, leaders have established a learning community where all staff seek to improve the quality of their teaching, learning and assessment continually. This is having a positive impact on improving standards even further.
- Leaders’ actions taken since September 2015 to strengthen the teaching of phonics are helping pupils to improve their ability to read, write and spell unfamiliar words. Consequently, a higher proportion of pupils are on track than in 2015 to reach the expected standard at the end of Year 1.
- Work in pupils’ books in the Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2 confirms that pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds effectively in their writing. The pupils tackle increasingly complex spelling, grammar and punctuation. Pupils in all classes are encouraged to write frequently. High-quality work was seen in English books on topics such as tropical rainforests and William Shakespeare. However, pupils are not given the same encouragement to write at length and practise and develop their skills in other subjects across the curriculum. In addition, work in these books confirms that the school’s agreed approach to presentation and handwriting is not always being implemented consistently. As a result, the quality of written work is variable and not as strong as that seen in most English books. Leaders are keen to address this to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress in all their writing.
- You have focused relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. Strong and effective staff training underpins the improvements made, and these in turn have had a positive impact on the high standards achieved at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. Your approach to the teaching of mathematics, introduced by the deputy headteacher, is highly effective and is now being adopted by other schools locally. Teachers’ questioning probes and deepens pupils’ learning continually. For example, pupils in Year 6 were observed solving complex mathematical problems but also challenging themselves to develop their reasoning and understanding even further. This approach is particularly successful in ensuring that the most able pupils achieve their full potential. A higher proportion of pupils than found nationally achieve the higher level in mathematics.

- All leaders and staff focus relentlessly on the learning and achievement of disadvantaged pupils. This work begins before children start school as a result of the strong links with the onsite pre-school. Children's needs are identified early. For example, the school provides effective speech and language support for the youngest children in response to the needs identified. Work is then planned to ensure that all children, including boys, make good progress from their starting points. By the end of the Reception Year, the proportion achieving a good level of development is just below that found nationally. Children are well prepared for Year 1. Leaders' relentless focus on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils continues in all other year groups. Termly 'pupil progress meetings' swiftly identify those at risk of falling behind or needing support to achieve their potential. This approach is particularly effective; disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than their peers.
- Since becoming an academy, it has been a school priority to train new leaders to drive improvements in their subjects. These leaders demonstrate a commitment to improving the quality of teaching and learning and are taking an increasingly wider role in checking pupils' progress and standards in their subjects. They use their subject knowledge to support colleagues to improve their practice successfully. This is helping teachers to deliver high-quality lessons which build pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects across the curriculum. However, leaders do not always check with sufficient rigour that the school's agreed approaches to writing across the curriculum and in presentation of work in all subjects are being implemented effectively. As a result, there is some inconsistency and variability in the quality of work across the school.
- Pupils show great respect for and tolerance of others. Behaviour in the school is exemplary. The onsite 'hub' for the school's most vulnerable pupils is highly effective in meeting their needs. This provision also welcomes pupils from local schools to provide the support they need. This high-quality provision is improving pupils' behaviour, attitudes to learning and reducing significantly the incidences of exclusions from school. In addition, the school's ethos is strongly rooted in developing all aspects of pupils' personal achievement. This includes ensuring that they receive support for mental health concerns, if required, so that all pupils reach their potential.
- The school has a broad curriculum with a strong focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum is effective in developing skills in a range of subjects. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in French, music and physical education. Pupils learn to converse in another language, compose their own music and take part in a wide range of sports.
- Governors are committed to the school and ambitious for its continued success. They have made strong appointments which have contributed positively to the school's improvement. They know the school's strengths and areas for development because they visit regularly to obtain their own first-

hand evidence. They explicitly check the performance of disadvantaged pupils and the most vulnerable to ensure that these pupils achieve well. Minutes of meetings confirm that they support school staff but also challenge effectively to ensure that all aspects of the school's work continue to improve.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- pupils are able to practise and further develop their skills in writing in all subjects across the curriculum
- the school's approach to handwriting and presentation is implemented consistently across the school
- all leaders, and especially those new to their roles, further develop their skills to monitor the quality of written work in their subjects rigorously.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Leahy
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the chair of the governing body and other governors, and subject leaders for mathematics and English. I spoke with parents at the start of the day and with pupils during the inspection, including at breaktimes. I accompanied you on visits to lessons and looked at work in pupils' books from all classes. In addition, I looked at survey results from Parent View and the questionnaires returned from 31 staff members. I evaluated the accuracy of your self-evaluation as well as other documentation, including your records of behaviour. I checked the effectiveness of your safeguarding arrangements and systems for recruiting staff with you, governors and the school's business manager.