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Lorraine Hadley
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Dear Mrs Hadley

Short inspection of Beaconside Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 11 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 the school was judged to be good in June 2011.

This school continues to be good.

Since the last inspection there has been a significant turnover of staff. You took up your appointment as headteacher in September last year and lost no time in further developing the good quality of education identified at the last inspection. You have firmly established your commitment to ongoing improvement and successfully convinced all those concerned about the journey ahead. Staff, pupils, parents and governors feel valued and are proud to be members of Beaconside Primary and Nursery School.

You are ably supported by a deputy headteacher, an assistant headteacher and a data and assessment manager; all recent appointments. Together, you have introduced fresh ideas and shared significant subject knowledge. You commissioned appropriate experts to review independently how well the school was doing and took immediate action to bring about effective improvements. You made sure all staff received relevant training to support the necessary changes. Their increased confidence is evident in the extent to which they now contribute to improvements and share their skills.

You quickly took the necessary steps to address the area for improvement identified at the previous inspection. You consulted parents, arranged significant training for staff and invited suitably qualified experts to develop specific support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. The majority of pupils attending the on-site autism unit are now fully integrated into the school. Staff have the necessary

expertise to identify pupils' barriers to learning, analyse the causes and determine how pupils can be best supported. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress. The pupils are confident, happy and clearly communicate their engagement in learning. Your well-informed focus on pupils' mental well-being has benefits for all pupils as they learn to overcome individual difficulties and try out new experiences.

Safeguarding is effective.

All checks on staff, visitors and volunteers are complete, up to date and suitably detailed. Safeguarding and child protection policies link closely with other relevant policies in school to ensure all aspects are covered in suitable depth. Thorough checks are conducted on the appointment of staff, governors and volunteers. Staff and governor training is up to date. They are fully aware of the procedures to follow and contacts to make if and when concerns arise.

Pupils feel safe, secure and valued. They explained that everyone is friendly with one another. Pupils say they trust their teachers and can talk to any adult if they have a worry. Pupils know the different types of bullying but they were keen to explain, 'Everyone is friendly here.' A variety of visitors teach pupils about keeping safe in and out of school.

The parents who completed the online questionnaire and spoke to me at the end of the school day agreed that leaders and all staff have created a safe and caring school for their children. One parent wrote, 'I love that the school is small and intimate. All the children seem to know each other well and the older children always seem to look out for the smaller ones.' All other comments were similarly positive.

Inspection findings

- You have created a strong, collegiate atmosphere where everyone works hard so that pupils and adults can achieve their best. As one pupil explained, 'Humour is balanced with hard work. We have lots to enjoy.'
- You have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and you correctly identify the most pressing priorities for improvement. You base your judgements on a thorough and accurate analysis of pupils' rates of progress and the standards attained by different groups across all subjects. You gather a substantial range of evidence to support your judgements on teachers' performance and set clear and realistic targets. All staff are focused on further improvement and are willing to give their best.
- Governors work with an increasing awareness of their strategic role and responsibilities. They keep a close eye on pupils' progress and the effectiveness of additional government funding. They seek up-to-date and relevant training and appoint governors with an appropriate range of expertise and experience. The school meets the requirements on publication of specified information on its website. The information is precise, comprehensive and easily accessible.
- Staff work hard. No time is lost and teachers maintain a sharp focus on

what each pupil will learn and how they will acquire, practise and develop the necessary skills in a range of imaginative tasks. Activities are planned to capture pupils' interest and build systematically on prior learning. As a consequence, pupils are proud of their achievements, strive to do even better and are never put off by the occasional mistake or difficulty.

- You have developed a detailed system for tracking pupils' progress over time. All staff and pupils adopt the language of your 'progress ladder' so that each small step of development in any subject is identified, planned for and checked. Pupils accurately evaluate the quality of their own work and that of their peers. They are adept at setting themselves realistic and relevant targets. Pupils explained that their feedback helped teachers to plan additional explanations or practice until pupils understood. You regularly check pupils' progress in meetings with staff and consider the effectiveness of specific support.
- Pupils' achievements in a range of activities are identified and celebrated. As a consequence, pupils' high self-esteem is firmly established. In one class pupils wrote, 'I am proud of reaching a higher maths club so I can challenge myself', 'I am proud of coming third in a rugby tournament playing nationally against 12 teams', 'I am proud of my attendance because I come here every day.'
- Pupils practise and develop a range of writing styles appropriate for their age. They present their work neatly and in the main, correctly. Pupils write for different purposes. However, they do not have enough opportunity to apply and develop their writing skills for a range of subjects. Pupils are not yet developing their subject-related vocabulary in enough depth and this is holding back their ability to write in suitable detail in subjects such as history, geography and science. They are proud to achieve the standard required of them to write with pens rather than pencils and they take care over the presentation of their work.
- Pupils were proud to explain the class 'scrap book' which captures impressive practical mathematical investigations. These activities help pupils to successfully develop and embed their understanding by using a range of appropriate equipment and methods to solve problems. Pupils' mathematics books provide evidence that a wide range of topics are covered imaginatively and in suitable depth. Pupils make good progress over time.
- All pupils make at least expected rates of progress from their different starting points by the end of Year 6; many make more than expected progress. Last year, the standards attained by Year 6 pupils were above average in all subjects and well above national figures in mathematics and reading. The gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally closed. Standards by the end of Year 2 were average overall in all subjects.
- Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes ready to learn. They are inquisitive and confidently choose from a range of prepared activities. They know the daily routines and settle quickly. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception year was above the national average. However, boys performed less well than girls for the second year running in most of the areas of learning. Current progress checks provide evidence of improvement although girls'

achievements remain stronger than those of boys. Recent support from the local authority has correctly focused on improving children's understanding of reading, writing and number.

- Pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school. They have a strong sense of right and wrong. Expectations of their behaviour and manner are fundamental to the school's values and are clearly understood by pupils. Year 6 pupils explained that lessons were fun; 'We feel excited about subjects, for example when we cut out shapes to make parallelograms rather than just reading about it.' They appreciate their surroundings and love going into the woods to observe nature and search for bugs. Older pupils enjoy the responsibilities of leading play activities for younger pupils and organising fundraising events as part of the school council. They appreciate the wide range of after-school clubs and activities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils develop their writing skills in a range of subjects
- early years staff provide activities which help to close the gap in achievement between boys and girls
- early years staff improve children's knowledge, skills and understanding in reading, writing and number.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Worcestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met you, the deputy headteacher, the data and assessment manager, the early years leader, four governors, pupils and parents. I spoke to the school improvement adviser on the telephone. I observed lessons and looked at pupils' work. In the absence of sufficient responses from Parent View, I looked at the school's parent survey findings and the responses to the electronic surveys for parents and staff. I looked at a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation and plans for development. I considered information regarding pupils' standards of attainment and rates of progress and a range of school policies including those for safeguarding, child protection, special educational needs and the impact of additional government funding.