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Mrs Julie Jenkinson
Headteacher
Bawtry Mayflower Primary School
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Dear Mrs Jenkinson

Short inspection of Bawtry Mayflower Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 June 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 last inspected in March 2011.

This school continues to be good.

You and your team have created a happy, vibrant school in which pupils thrive academically and personally. The working atmosphere in Bawtry Mayflower is purposeful and productive. Members of the school community – adults and pupils – get on well together, treating each other with respect and courtesy. Pupils behave very well in lessons and during breaktimes. At work and play, pupils are enthusiastic participants. Parents, pupils and teachers are united in their view that pupils enjoy school and are safe and well cared for by adults.

You are improving the school's effectiveness because you are using monitoring and evaluation to focus your team's efforts on the right things. Since the last inspection you have sustained the school's good performance and overseen a trend of improving outcomes in the early years and key stage 1. These outcomes compare favourably to other primary schools, and younger pupils' securely developing skills in reading, writing and number are preparing them very well for key stage 2. In response to a dip in outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2015, you acted swiftly to effect improvements. This year the impact of changes in the teaching of mathematics and reading is accelerating progress for pupils in key stage 2 classes.

Governors expect and receive regular updates on aspects of the school's performance. The governing body asks pertinent questions of the headteacher and also of other leaders to ensure their challenge is directed where it is required. Over time, governors have been influential in setting school priorities.

At the last inspection, you were asked to focus on improving the quality and use of information technology resources. You were also asked to extend pupils' understanding of communities beyond the school's locality. You have completely revised the approach to teaching computer skills and using information technology to support learning. Gone is the IT suite, replaced by laptops. I observed key stage 1 pupils developing their keyboard skills as they engaged with an e-learning activity connected to their topic work. Pupils use the internet purposefully, for example to help research class contributions to the whole-school 'news review' which opens their eyes to current events and the everyday lives of people in faraway places.

Staff are overwhelmingly supportive of your leadership and are proud to work at Bawtry Mayflower. The large majority of parents agree that the school provides well for their children in all regards, although some parents of older pupils are uncertain about the impact of mixed-age classes on the quality of their children's learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school takes very seriously its responsibilities to keep pupils safe and to help pupils make the right decisions to ensure their own safety. This was clear when older pupils spoke knowledgeably about e-safety and a mixed-age group expressed confidence in teachers to 'look after' them if they had worries. You ensure that staff and governors are appropriately trained so that all adults know what to do to keep pupils safe. Where a child may be at risk of harm, you make sure that teachers are watchful for any changes in behaviour that raise concerns that need the prompt intervention of other agencies. As the designated safeguarding lead, you have joined an online forum which you find valuable in keeping your knowledge and understanding of safeguarding matters up to date. Checks on staff suitability to work with children are made and systematically recorded.

Inspection findings

- The school is successful in laying secure foundations in learning. Teaching of early reading, writing and number skills is strong and children are well prepared for learning further up the school. Outcomes in the early years have improved over time and a higher-than-average proportion of children achieve a good level of development.
- The good start continues through key stage 1 and, in 2015, standards in reading, writing and mathematics compared favourably to national averages. Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to developing younger pupils' skills and confidence. The lasting impact of effective early teaching is seen higher up the school where pupils are confident to tackle unfamiliar words and display a wide vocabulary.
- Key stage 2 attainment and progress in 2015 were broadly average, a dip compared to 2014. The performance of boys compared to girls, especially in reading, and the relatively slower progress of the cohort in mathematics accounted for the dip. Concerted action, delivered through new middle leadership arrangements, has accelerated progress this year.

- Boys enjoy reading books from the refreshed library stock and, like girls, this year benefit from more time in key stage 2 for guided reading. Younger boys read fluently to each other, delighting in the antics of 'Phantom Phil' and 'Winnie the Witch'. Their comprehension was evident as they eagerly explained to me each character's personality. In lessons, boys participate with enthusiasm equal to that of girls.
- The development of mathematics teaching has given teachers greater confidence and a sharper edge in managing mathematics lessons and learning. A greater emphasis on the use of specialist resources is helping pupils to master mathematics concepts securely. At both key stage 1 and key stage 2, progress in writing has been consistently strong over time and this year has seen a greater emphasis on spelling.
- Pupils behave very well. They are keen to learn, engaging sensibly and often enthusiastically in activities. Their sensible attitudes contribute to their learning when they are asked to work together. Pupils enjoy playing and socialising together in the attractive and well-resourced outdoor space, an area of the school where parent-teacher association fundraising has truly benefited all pupils.
- Pupils politely welcome visitors to school, confidently sharing their overwhelmingly positive views of school life. Pupils' opinions reveal that mathematics is a favourite subject with many – a resounding endorsement of the impact of work done to improve the quality of mathematics teaching. Attendance is healthy, at just over 96% for this school year.
- Teaching over time has ensured that pupils have achieved the good outcomes necessary to be prepared for secondary school. Regular training for teachers makes sure that they are well equipped to deliver the demands of the curriculum through effective teaching in every key stage. More detail in the feedback to individual teachers would, however, help them make refinements to aspects of their practice.
- An increasing pupil roll has caused the headteacher and governors to think hard about the best way to manage unequal-sized year groups within financial constraints. The decision to keep key stage 1 classes small is paying off in ensuring a secure start for children. Teaching and learning in mixed-age groups in lower key stage 2 is underpinned by teachers' careful and collaborative planning.
- Teachers know their pupils' needs well. Small-group support is used to good effect to add value to learning, either plugging gaps or consolidating learning before or after lessons. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as their classmates. There is scope for teachers to push the most able pupils in key stage 2 to reach higher standards through more challenging tasks that extend knowledge and understanding.

- A range of interesting after-school clubs are popular and complement a suitable balance of academic subjects. Pupils have an opportunity to play a musical instrument, participate in sport or join the choir. Residential trips and a few days experiencing life in secondary school build independence and confidence for older pupils.

Next steps for the school

If the school is to continue to maintain good provision for pupils in the next few years, school leaders and members of the governing body must ensure that:

- key stage 2 teaching provides greater challenge to the most able pupils so that more of them reach higher standards
- aspects of individual teachers' practice are refined through feedback that is acted upon to improve teaching to the very highest standard
- communication with parents of key stage 2 pupils in mixed-age classes helps them understand how continuity and challenge in their children's learning are assured.

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

Yours sincerely

Cathryn Kirby
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector met with the headteacher and other school leaders to discuss and agree inspection activities. The inspector also met with governors and a group of pupils. During the day, the inspector spoke informally with other staff and pupils, and with parents collecting their children at the end of the day. The inspector visited classrooms with the headteacher to observe teaching and learning. Together they reviewed a small sample of mathematics books. The inspector listened to pupils read and spoke with pupils during outdoor break. A range of documents were reviewed, including those relating to safeguarding and to the school's monitoring and evaluation of its work. The responses from inspection questionnaires completed by staff and parents were also considered.