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Heather Gosney
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Dear Mrs Gosney

Short inspection of Biggin CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 October 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have led the staff well and communicated consistent messages about your high expectations. Your actions to improve previous weaknesses have made a demonstrable difference to pupils' achievement across the school. Notwithstanding these improvements, you have continued to develop the quality of teaching across the school and to focus sharply on achieving even higher standards for individual pupils.

The school's values, enshrined in the motto, 'Achieve, Believe, Care', are palpable among staff and pupils. Pupils have a remarkable sense of determination to achieve their very best. They value their small school environment. One pupil remarked, 'Everyone helps each other... we're like a family.' Teachers work hard to meet individual pupils' needs and they are committed to improving their own teaching skills. Pupils, parents and staff agree that the school's caring ethos is a strength of the school. 'The school goes above and beyond to adapt to individual families' needs,' said one parent, illustrating well the level of parental support for the school and its staff.

At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors identified that pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics and the progress of the most able were areas in need of improvement. Since then, you have taken action to tackle these areas in a number of ways. The teachers' improved quality of feedback to pupils and the increased

focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar are improving pupils' writing skills across the school. Training and development opportunities for staff and external consultancy support have improved the quality of mathematics teaching. Teachers are now becoming more skilled at enabling pupils to reason and apply their mathematical skills than at the time of the previous inspection. Some older pupils still lack confidence with basic number and arithmetic skills, which may hinder their ability to tackle more complex mathematical problems. You acknowledge that many of the strategies to improve writing and mathematics still need time to embed further, in order to maximise current pupils' achievement. You have ensured that pupils' targets to improve their work are specific and personalised. The teachers encourage the most able pupils to take on greater challenges in lessons and for homework. Most of these pupils are on track to achieve the higher standards by the end of key stages 1 and 2.

Disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the school. You have spent pupil premium money astutely to create more opportunities for these pupils to get extra support from staff. These pupils' emotional and academic needs are understood well by teachers. Some of the pupils who are on track to achieve the higher standards at the end of key stage 2 are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding. There is little difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of others in the school. Those disadvantaged pupils who had poor attendance to school previously are now attending more regularly and making rapid progress. One of the reasons for this success is teachers' successful strategies to support families.

The governing body is improving its effectiveness. Its committees monitor the work of the school regularly. Governors' ability to hold leaders to account fully and ensure value for money is somewhat compromised because the information they receive from you is not always detailed enough. The way that you evaluate the effectiveness of the pupil premium and the physical education and sport premium funding spend does not provide sufficient information for governors to judge whether the money spent is worth it. The information on the school's website about these matters does not meet statutory requirements.

Safeguarding is effective.

You are the designated safeguarding leader, and the early years and key stage 1 coordinator is the deputy. Between you, you have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are securely embedded in the school's systems, culture and ethos. Staff are acutely aware of the particular local risks pertinent to the school. Staff are vigilant and professional when dealing with all safeguarding matters. The school's record-keeping shows that leaders are tenacious when following up child protection concerns.

The pupils spoken to during the inspection and those who responded to the Ofsted pupil survey overwhelmingly agree with one another that they feel safe and that bullying is rare. Parents and staff support this view. The pupils are taught well how to keep themselves safe online; pupils of all ages are confident that they can go to any member of staff if they are worried or upset. You are developing the curriculum

to further promote British values and raise awareness about the dangers of extremist views.

Inspection findings

- Your self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate. You have rightly prioritised teaching, especially in relation to mathematics and writing, as an area for improvement. You acknowledge that the strategies you have introduced have yet to be embedded fully across the school, despite early signs of improvement.
- Governors have undertaken training and development and are receptive to guidance and support. They accept that they would be able to hold leaders to account more effectively if they received information from you that details, more specifically, the impact of additional government funding. Governors are not fulfilling their legal obligation to publish this information on the school's website. While you have helped to develop governors' understanding of pupils' performance information, they are not all clear about how different groups of pupils are performing, especially the most able.
- The early years and key stage 1 coordinator is knowledgeable and effective. She ensures that there is smooth transition between pre-school settings and Reception. The provision in the early years has been developed to ensure that children have opportunities to develop all areas of learning. Staff encourage early writing skills regularly. Younger children play alongside older pupils comfortably. The coordinator is skilful in ensuring that all pupils make progress in the mixed-age class. All pupils conduct themselves maturely and listen to teachers' instructions well.
- The pupils' reading attitudes and skills are developed well by teachers. The pupils from all age groups demonstrate a genuine joy for reading and stories. The most able pupils express mature views about different authors and why they like them. They can identify the different language techniques the author uses that make their stories enjoyable.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about the new reading scheme you have introduced. Pupils enjoy the quizzes about their books and the opportunities to see their reading skills improve.
- All pupils reached the expected standard in the phonics test at the end of Year 2 in 2016. Younger pupils show good skills in decoding words using their phonics knowledge. Older pupils read fluently and use appropriate intonation.
- The pupils conduct themselves sensibly around the school. They are polite and well-mannered. As they get older, they become more confident, articulate and self-assured. Parents of recent school leavers attest to the fact that the teachers prepare pupils well for secondary school. Older pupils are given various positions of responsibility which they undertake diligently. They are happy to come to school and they attend school regularly.
- A particular unique feature of the school is the way teachers know and understand all pupils' individual needs. Teachers take time to understand each pupil's individual circumstance and plan lessons to meet their needs. They are sensitive to changes in behaviour. They motivate and encourage pupils to reach their best.

- You and other leaders ensure that pupils with additional needs are provided with the correct support. The school's successful relationship with parents and external professional agencies has contributed to the good progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- You keep meticulous records of the support you provide for pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils. The school's decision to use pupil premium funding to provide extra teaching staff in key stage 2 is proving effective. The pupils are benefiting from closer monitoring and work that matches their individual needs and capabilities. A sharper evaluation of this support to governors by you would help them to judge how each intervention is giving value for money.
- The school is developing the curriculum to ensure that pupils have a sound understanding of cultures and faiths other than their own. The pupils have visited a mosque and have experienced the Hindu custom of mehndi hand-painting at the Derby Cultural Centre visit.
- The local authority has provided effective support for you, governors and teachers. Representatives of the local authority demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They also acknowledge the areas for further development and are committed to supporting the school to address weaker areas, including the effectiveness of governance. The representatives have undertaken valuable work to help up-skill teachers and leaders to assess pupils' work more effectively. They have actively encouraged school-to-school support, which you and other teachers have valued.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the use of additional government funding is evaluated more rigorously and published on the school's website
- governors develop their skills further to challenge leaders more effectively
- the information provided to governors about the effectiveness of the school, particularly in relation to pupils' progress and the use of government funding, is more evaluative
- the strategies to improve writing and mathematics are further embedded across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Zarina Connolly
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held interviews with you and other leaders and teachers, governors and local authority representatives. I spoke with pupils, observed them learning and examined their work books. I spoke with five parents and received a letter from one. I heard pupils read from most year groups. I evaluated a range of school documentation including: the school's self-evaluation; the school's action plans; pupils' performance information; and safeguarding records. I took account of 12 responses from parents to the Ofsted's online free-text facility, four responses from pupils and six from members of staff to the online survey. The school's website does not comply with current government statutory guidance. The reporting about the pupil premium and the physical education and sport premium spending is insufficient.

Inspection activities aimed to investigate the leaders' progress and effectiveness in relation to improving pupils' writing, the achievement of the most able pupils, the teaching of reading and pupils' attendance.