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Mr Darren Jones
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Jones

Short inspection of Bishop Wilson Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 November 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 September 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 and your leadership team have created a school in which pupils feel safe and happy and are eager to learn. Staff know each of the pupils well, and parents are appreciative of the individual care and support that their children receive. During the inspection, pupils, parents, staff and governors all described Bishop Wilson School as being 'a big family', which very accurately describes the atmosphere within the school.

The areas for improvement that were identified at the last inspection have been addressed successfully. Teachers are making sure that pupils have opportunities to write in a range of subjects. Work in books shows that pupils take care with their handwriting and that presentation is neat. Improvements in the teaching of phonics have had a positive impact on pupils' spelling. As a result, levels of attainment in writing by the time pupils leave Year 6 have risen since the previous inspection and are typically higher than the national average. However, you recognise that there is still more to be done and that pupils in key stage 1 would make swifter progress if they had more regular opportunities to write at length.

There is no sense of complacency in the school, and school leaders and governors have a shared ambition to continue to move the school forward so that Bishop Wilson School is the best that it can be. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, ensuring that leaders and governors have a clear picture of what needs to be done

to secure further improvements. The capacity of the leadership team to tackle issues and improve provision is shown by the effectiveness of actions taken to improve the outcomes in early years. From a low point three years ago, these have risen to be above the national average. Children in the early years get off to a good start to their school lives and thrive in an environment that is calm, nurturing and full of things for them to do.

You and your leadership team have correctly recognised that, over time, progress in mathematics has not been as strong as in reading and writing. This has particularly been the case in key stage 2. You have now put strategies in place to address this issue, including adopting a new system for planning and increasing the focus on number, calculation and problem solving. Work in pupils' books shows that these changes are having a positive impact and that progress is accelerating. This was confirmed by pupils' level of confidence in lessons when tackling mathematical problems. There is potential to accelerate progress further by ensuring that pupils, particularly the most able, are sufficiently stretched and challenged by the tasks set for them.

The pupils at the school are friendly and well-mannered. They speak enthusiastically about their learning and very clearly enjoy the breadth of the curriculum on offer to them. Pupils have few concerns about behaviour in the school, and are confident that staff will look after them and deal with any problems should they arise. The pupils' happiness with the school is confirmed by the very large majority of parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View, or who spoke to the inspector. One parent's comment, 'I can't speak highly enough of the whole DNA of the school.' summed up the positive remarks made by parents about many different aspects of the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. Staff and governors receive regular training to ensure that they are able to recognise signs that a child may be in danger of harm, and know what to do if they have a concern. Where staff have been worried about a pupil's well-being, leaders have diligently followed those concerns through, working with external agencies where appropriate. Thorough checks are made on staff, governors, volunteers and visitors to the school to ensure that they are suitable people to work with children.

Making sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations is an important part of the school's curriculum. Visits from the fire brigade and St John's Ambulance service have given pupils first-hand knowledge of fire safety and first aid. Pupils also display an impressive knowledge of internet safety and can talk about strategies that they use to ensure that they stay safe online.

Inspection findings

- The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. From their different starting points, pupils' progress in reading is strong throughout the school. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils' attainment is typically above the national average. Pupils' capability as readers is matched by their enthusiasm for reading. Pupils at an early stage of reading use their phonic skills effectively to tackle unfamiliar words. The most able readers read for pleasure and to research topics being covered in school. They talk confidently about different styles of books that they like and name a range of favourite authors, such as Anthony Horowitz and Michael Morpurgo.
- Pupils are confident and articulate. They are able to express views and opinions clearly and can discuss their thinking when tackling their work. Pupils in Year 2 displayed impressive vocabulary, being able to accurately define and use adjectives such as 'feisty' and 'affectionate' when writing short descriptions.
- The school's curriculum provides pupils with a good range of relevant and interesting learning opportunities. Teachers make good use of the resources in the local area, such as the Roman city of Deva (Chester), and skilfully utilise different areas of the curriculum to explore various aspects of a topic. This approach is very successful in capturing pupils' interest. Pupils spoke knowledgeably and enthusiastically about previous topics they had covered, as well as those currently being studied.
- The curriculum is enhanced by musical instrumental tuition, sports coaching and a wide range of clubs that take place after school. Residential visits for pupils in key stage 2 provide further opportunities for pupils to develop different skills beyond the school setting.
- Leaders have ensured that effective support is put in place to help pupils who need it, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils' needs are carefully assessed and then addressed through individualised programmes.
- Governors play an active role in the life of the school and provide a most effective balance of support and challenge to school leaders. They are knowledgeable about data and what it tells them about the quality of learning in the school.
- The learning environment around school, including the classrooms, is attractive and well maintained. The playground provides pupils with plenty of choice at playtimes, including spaces for games activities and quiet sitting areas. Inside, displays celebrate pupils' work and include some striking artwork.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- progress in mathematics for pupils in key stage 2 is further accelerated by ensuring that pupils, particularly the most able, are provided with tasks which challenge them
- pupils in key stage 1 are provided with more regular opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills by writing at length.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Chester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cheshire West and Chester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Neil Dixon

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Prior to the inspection, I identified a number of lines of enquiry which informed the focus of my work in the school:

- Are pupils in key stage 2 making enough progress in mathematics?
- Are pupils in key stage 1 building on the improvements in outcomes in early years and for phonics by making good progress in writing?
- How has the school secured improved outcomes for children in early years?
- Are the school's arrangements for keeping children safe effective?

During this short inspection I met with you and the deputy headteacher, teaching and support staff and seven members of the governing body. I also spoke with representatives from the local authority and the diocese. I considered the 25 responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and spoke to parents at the start of the school day. I also received one letter from a parent. There were eight responses to the online staff questionnaire and four responses to the pupil questionnaire. We visited all classrooms to observe teaching and learning, look at books and talk to pupils. I met with a group of pupils during the day, and heard a number of other pupils read. I also observed pupils on the playground at breaktime. I conducted a detailed review of safeguarding, including checking on the school's policies, procedures and record-keeping and talking to you, other staff and governors about how the school ensures that children are kept safe. I also considered a range of other documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and information about pupils' progress and attainment.