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Mrs Debra Wade
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Wade

Short inspection of Bawnmore Community Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 3 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 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, your staff and governors effectively promote the school's core values (the four 'Ts') that encourage pupils 'To care, To enjoy, To learn, Together'. Pupils' views are respected and you provide them with the opportunity to carry out their own self-evaluation of the school. This is impressive, as pupils' views are incorporated into leaders' improvement plans.

You and your governors provide strong and effective leadership which is continuing to improve the quality of teaching. As you know, the two areas for improvement reported at the time of the school's previous inspection were to focus more on the challenge that teachers offer pupils in lessons, as well as providing opportunities for pupils to assess their own work; and to produce an assessment framework for subjects other than English and mathematics. Teaching has improved as teachers pose challenging questions during lessons and pupils' work shows that they have ample opportunities to independently check and improve their work.

Pupils' work in books and assessment information show that pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points in all year groups, with some pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or additional learning needs, making rapid progress.

You and the deputy headteacher have skilfully managed training and professional development which have sharpened the way teachers assess and monitor pupils'

progress. Teachers and support staff have adapted well to the requirements of the new national curriculum which includes assessment without levels for all subjects. You have worked hard with the staff team to adopt the new age-related standards pupils are required to meet by calibrating their progress in all subjects using a new point system. Leaders and staff use this system effectively to gauge how much progress pupils make. More should now be done to identify the most able children in the early years sooner and to check more often whether they are on track to reach high standards in Years 1 and 2. There remains good early years provision in both the pre-school setting and Reception classes. In the early years, examples of children's work and progress are set out very clearly in books called 'learning journeys'. However, assessment information shows that some of the children who exceeded age-related standards in the early years did not reach the higher standards expected of them. These standards are defined as learning at greater depth by the end of Years 1 and 2.

The most recent national assessment results in 2016, although unvalidated at this stage for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, are encouraging. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average, including the small number of disadvantaged pupils who also reached the expected standards. However, assessments also show that some of the most able pupils did not attain the higher standard in mathematics which demonstrates understanding at greater depth. Pupils tend to make more rapid progress in reading and writing compared with mathematics. In reading for example, pupils make outstanding progress by the end of Year 1. The national phonics screening results in 2016, although not yet validated, show that the vast majority of pupils reached the expected standard. This is because reading and writing are consistently well taught in all classes.

The curriculum and teaching have a very positive effect on pupils' academic, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The staff plan a creative and varied curriculum that interests and enlivens pupils. For example, children in the early years enjoy walks to local wooded areas in surrounding areas. The children learn about seasonal changes to woodland habitats and learn to appreciate the natural world. Outdoor activities such as these inspire pupils' imagination and curiosity as they embark on scientific enquiries about the world around them. Another example of the stimulating and varied activities pupils experience was the recent 'space masterclass' for Year 2 pupils following their work on Tim Peake, the astronaut from the National Space Centre in Leicester who visited the school to talk to pupils. The pupils produced work in books and displays of high-quality writing and artwork about space exploration. Pupils thoroughly enjoy and absorb these and many more rich experiences. Most of the parents I spoke with during the inspection confirmed how much their children enjoy coming to school. I can see why, as you and your staff team make learning interesting, fun and exciting for children in the pre-school, Reception Year and Years 1 and 2.

You, the deputy headteacher and governors assess pupils' progress and teachers' performance accurately. Leaders and staff carry out a range of monitoring that includes reviews of pupils' work in books, lesson visits to observe the quality of

teaching and analyses of pupils' progress using the school's accurate assessment information. The learning improvement plan sets out the right priorities for further improvement to teaching and learning, but does not specify how regularly leaders and governors check the impact of actions taken to address these priorities. The improvement plan sets out clear measures of success to gauge how much progress is being made but does not include timescales, stages or milestones to ensure that checks are regular enough to judge whether the school is on track to meet its stated expectations and priorities.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding procedures are robust and effective. Staff vetting and checking systems are rigorous and up to date. Teaching, support and administrative staff are well trained and vigilant. Both governors and staff carry out regular reviews of the school's procedures. The safety, security and well-being of three-year-old children in the pre-school is managed by well-qualified and skilled early years practitioners. There are effective security systems in place to make sure that pre-school children are safe and secure both indoors and outdoors. The vast majority of parents that I spoke to and those responding to questionnaire or text messages to Ofsted's regional West Midlands office, agreed that pupils are safe in school and are very well cared for by the staff.

Inspection findings

- Teaching and assessment have improved well since the previous inspection. You and your staff accurately monitor pupils' progress and performance. Standards are above average and the teaching remains good.
- You have adopted an effective assessment system since the previous inspection to help teachers adapt to the requirements of the new national curriculum. We looked at some assessment information together and you and the deputy headteacher were very clear about how to calibrate pupils' progress.
- As you know, the most able children in the early years, both in the pre-school and Reception classes, make good progress. However, leaders and staff are not consistently tracking the most able children soon enough to ensure that they achieve high standards in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils respond well in lessons and their work in books is well presented, reflecting the high expectations set by staff.
- Pupils behave very well. They are keen to do their best and try hard. The wonderful range of writing, artwork and displays of pupils' work around the school and in their work books demonstrates how well your staff value pupils' efforts and achievements.
- Teachers and support staff prepare a good range of resources that support pupils' learning. Independent writing is improving very well and pupils are learning to accurately spell and punctuate their writing. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 contribute to the 'Bawnmore Bugle', a school newspaper that includes interesting articles, jokes, and factual accounts of school

- events and, for example, the celebration of Her Majesty the Queen's birthday. Pupils market and sell the 'Bawnmore Bugle' to parents and the local community, which helps pupils to be enterprising and show initiative.
- Teachers skilfully teach phonics throughout the early years (pre-school and Reception) right through to the end of Year 2. Pupils' work shows that they have a very secure understanding of how to break up letter sounds and blend them together to independently read and write unfamiliar words.
 - The most recent and unvalidated national assessment results show that pupils achieve well overall in mathematics as the vast majority reach the expected standard by the end of Year 2. However, assessments show that the most able pupils could do better. Some of the most able pupils fall short of reaching high standards in mathematics or demonstrate that they have acquired knowledge and understanding at greater depth.
 - Teachers and support staff share best practice within and beyond the school to sustain improvements to their teaching. Leaders and governors have skilfully established effective partnerships with other schools in the local network to share ideas and develop staff training. You and the governors are not complacent and have an ambitious vision for the school. For example, at the time of the inspection the school was establishing a soft federation with four more schools.
 - You and the governing body are committed to continuous improvement. You have worked with governors and staff to produce a useful learning improvement plan. The plan identifies the right priorities to take the school forward and both you and the governing body use this to identify what is working well and what needs to improve further. However, the improvement plan does not set out stages or periodic milestones to help leaders and governors check if the school is on track to meet its stated actions and priorities.
 - The local authority thinks highly of the school. The increasing partnerships with the newly established federation and local network enable staff to see and share best practice. There is good capacity for sustained improvement to teaching, learning and pupil outcomes.
 - The school's curriculum and additional enrichment events and activities are wide ranging and stimulating for pupils. The activities planned for pupils enrich their school experience and have a positive impact on their academic and personal development. Special enterprise days, where pupils plan to sell food and items made in school, enable them to develop their independence, self-confidence and entrepreneurial skills. Pupils participate in regular song festivals or ensembles when the choir is taken on special visits to sing to a range of audiences. The quality of singing in assemblies and events such as these is superb.
 - Exciting special events are planned. For example, pupils dressed up as buccaneers on a recent 'pirate day' to complement a visiting theatre company's performance of Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Treasure Island'. This energised pupils into producing pictures and written accounts of their experiences.

- Early years children thoroughly enjoy regular visits from the fire and police services to learn about their roles in keeping local communities safe. Special events, assemblies and themes are very well planned to promote British values of tolerance and respect for all faiths, customs and cultures.
- Physical education, sport and after-school clubs, such as the 'Bawnmore Blackbirds' cheerleaders and a martial arts club, promote healthy and active lifestyles. There are very good participation rates in the extensive range of after-school clubs.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to focus on the progress of the most able pupils in mathematics to make sure they reach the higher standard and demonstrate understanding at greater depth
- staff use assessments to track the performance of children in the early years who exceed the standards expected for their age so they all reach high standards by the end of Year 1 and Year 2
- the learning improvement plan includes milestones or regular checking points to help leaders, governors and staff gauge the impact of actions taken to meet the school's stated priorities.

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

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

In addition to meeting with you, your deputy headteacher and three governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, I visited lessons in all classrooms and the early years with you. I spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day to seek their views about the school. I also considered the views of parents and carers responding to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and some comments sent to Ofsted during the inspection by text message. I spoke to a number of pupils during lessons and looked at their work in books. I held a telephone conversation with a learning improvement officer from Warwickshire to speak about the support offered by the authority. I looked at the results from the most recent national tests and teacher assessments, focusing on pupil outcomes in the Reception Year, phonic screening test results in Year 1 and assessment results

in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. I scrutinised and discussed the school's self-evaluation and the learning improvement plan, as well as checking staff vetting and safeguarding procedures to determine whether the school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

I also inspected the pre-school provision (Bawnmore Cygnets Pre-School), which is managed by the governing body. This provision accommodates three-year-old children, some of whom attend part time and some full time. This provision is part of the school's overall early years provision which includes two Reception classes for four-year-old children who all attend full time.

During this short inspection I tested four lines of enquiry:

- The quality of teaching and achievement of the most able pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils and how well leaders and staff track the progress and performance of all pupils across the school.
- The extent to which leaders and governors have improved teaching and assessment since the previous inspection.
- The quality of early years provision in the pre-school setting and Reception classes.