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Mrs Clare McConnell
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Dear Mrs McConnell

Short inspection of Bisley CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 2017, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since joining the school in September 2016, you have worked closely with staff and governors to create a strong team that places the needs of pupils at the heart of the school. School leaders are highly ambitious and, under your leadership, they have created a culture of high expectations for staff and pupils. The leadership team, together with staff and governors, share a vision with a clear sense of purpose that is instrumental in driving the school forward.

You have led the school successfully through a period of considerable change. The reorganised leadership team is stronger because you have made sure that leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities. You appointed key staff to new posts to secure further improvements. You harnessed high-quality support from the local authority to help the drive for school improvement. The changes you have made have had a rapid and direct impact on improving the quality of teaching. Consequently, teaching is effective and pupils learn well.

Pupils have very positive attitudes and they want to do well. They learn in a happy, safe and calm environment and this encourages them to behave positively. They get on very well together regardless of background and say that everyone is welcome. Pupils enjoy learning and the additional challenges that teachers provide for them.

Relationships between staff and pupils are good and staff encourage pupils to try hard with their work. This helps pupils to become independent learners who are resilient and who persevere even when faced with tricky problems. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, attend school regularly and arrive on time.

You have improved communication with parents so that they are well informed about events and life in school. Parents appreciate the changes you have brought about and the way in which they are greeted at the school gate in the morning. One parent reflected the views of many in her written comment: 'This is a brilliant primary school with a strong community feel which I feel has developed significantly under the current headteacher. The children are actively encouraged to grow as individuals, nurturing their self-confidence, and they are offered numerous opportunities that have not previously been available.' However, you recognise that more could be done to improve communications further, particularly by ensuring that parents are provided with all statutory information on your school website.

In the short time that you have been in the school, you have brought about improvements since the previous inspection. You have taken decisive action to strengthen the quality of teaching so that all groups of pupils, including those who are most able, make good progress. One member of staff wrote: 'I do feel that the school is now better placed to encourage pupils to be the best they can with the current leadership.'

Together with your senior leaders, you quickly identified the main priorities for improvement that emerged during your initial review of the school. You took immediate action to raise standards in mathematics and this has been largely successful. However, you are aware that work in some pupils' books appears careless and some pupils do not carry out calculations or measurements accurately. You have also identified that some pupils have a legacy of weak basic skills in handwriting, spelling and punctuation, which is holding them back from making even faster progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong and effective culture of safeguarding in the school. Safeguarding is given high priority by staff and governors, who consider it regularly as part of their work. There is an expectation that it is the responsibility of everyone to ensure that pupils are safe. The child protection policy is reviewed regularly to ensure that it meets requirements of the most recent legislation and remains effective.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that adults take their concerns seriously. They know whom they can approach should they have a problem and feel confident that they will receive the right support. The large majority of parents who responded to the online survey agreed that their children are safe and well looked after in school.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Records of checks made on adults who work at the school or who visit the school are meticulous. Procedures for recruiting new staff are thorough, with checks made on their suitability to work with children. All staff have been trained so that they know exactly what to do if they have a concern that a child may be at risk of harm. Leaders work in close cooperation with external agencies to ensure that support for pupils and their families is provided in a timely way.

Inspection findings

- There were five key lines of enquiry for this inspection. In addition to evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, I also looked at the effectiveness of the new leadership team and the extent to which its work has raised standards in mathematics. I evaluated how well teaching enables groups of pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged, to make good progress. I also examined the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- You promptly and effectively reorganised the way in which mathematics is led and taught. Pupils now have more opportunities to think deeply and to explore mathematical concepts. They apply their skills, knowledge and understanding well to solve real-life problems and this helps them to consolidate their learning. For example, in a Year 3 class, pupils had to record the time at which they undertook activities throughout the day and calculate the difference in time between various activities. This helped pupils to understand the concept of time and develop their skills in measuring time.
- You use coaching and mentoring effectively to encourage teachers to improve their skills. They work together effectively and share the good practice that exists in the school. Teachers value the quality of support they have been given to improve their skills. One teacher commented, 'The new senior leadership team has offered us so many opportunities over the last term to develop our practice and encouraged us to share this new learning within our own classrooms.'
- Teaching across the school is effective and allows all groups of pupils, including the most able, to make good progress. Lessons are very well planned, based on next steps in learning. Most teachers are skilled in asking pupils questions that probe their understanding and deepen their learning.
- Lively discussion permeates the atmosphere in most classes. Teachers allow pupils the opportunity to share their ideas and discuss their thoughts. Teachers are skilled at picking up on pupils' misunderstandings and using these as a teaching point, enabling the lesson to move quickly and enhancing opportunities to develop pupils' learning. Pupils listen carefully to each other and respond appropriately and with consideration. They show respect towards the beliefs and opinions of others, knowing that they are of equal value, regardless of background.

- In most classes, pupils are expected to work hard. In some cases, though, pupils' books show that while they produce a lot of work, they do not always do so with appropriate care. Some pupils have a legacy of poor basic skills in writing and this slows their progress. Their handwriting is not consistently correctly formed, for example, and their understanding of basic spelling patterns is weak. Teachers do not always attend promptly to these weaknesses, slowing some children's progress.
- You have introduced a new system to record and track pupils' progress. This allows the identification of groups of pupils that may need additional support. In the past, disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as other pupils nationally. However, these pupils currently achieve at least as well as other pupils owing to the support they are given. You ensure that disadvantaged pupils share the same opportunities as their peers to develop their skills and confidence for the future. In addition, your effective use of the pupil premium funding provides appropriate additional support to ensure that disadvantaged pupils learn well.
- In the last school year, a very small number of pupils, including some who are disadvantaged, did not attend school as regularly as others. Leaders understand the valid reasons for their absence. The school's attendance information for this academic year shows that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, attend school regularly and few are persistently absent.
- School leaders and governors demonstrate clear capacity to continue to improve the school. The school remains good because, within a short timescale, you have reversed the decline in standards seen in 2016. You have brought about a significant change to the culture of the school by raising expectations for what pupils should achieve. This has raised staff morale and created a strong team spirit, with everyone contributing to the future development of the school. You have ambitious plans for further improvement that are rooted in your accurate analysis of the needs of the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's website meets all statutory requirements
- pupils always present their work to the highest possible standard
- clear guidance is provided to pupils so that they improve the quality of their writing by editing and correcting their spelling, handwriting and punctuation.

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

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Together with the headteacher, I visited eight lessons or parts of lessons and I looked at work in pupils' books. I spoke with pupils at lunchtime and I met formally with a group of pupils during the afternoon. I met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body, and I held a telephone conversation with the local authority adviser. I held discussions with school leaders and I looked at documentation showing how the school keeps pupils safe. I spoke informally to parents at the start of the day and I considered the 57 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also took into account the 21 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.