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Dear Ms Payne

Short inspection of Boothville Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 2017 with Kelly Lee, Ofsted Inspector, 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 June 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders are aspirational for pupils, and have a precise and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. You have used your detailed knowledge of pupils to create a sharply focused school improvement plan, designed to maximise pupils' progress, which is known and understood by all.

You have maintained the significant strengths noted at the previous inspection, particularly in terms of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are friendly, behave well and look after each other. The pupils I spoke with said that they enjoy school and that, 'learning is fun'. Positive messages on classroom doors, such as, 'sorry about the laughter, volume and/or chaos - we are learning', reinforce this. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. Pupils respect and trust their teachers, and are confident that teachers will support them to do their best.

Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment in the early years and the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 have risen to above national averages. Attainment at the ends of key stage 1 and key stage 2 has been consistently above national averages.

You rightly acknowledge, however, that pupils are not making good enough progress in writing by the end of key stage 2 from their strong starting points. You identified that the reason for this was pupils' lack of grammatical understanding.

You introduced a new whole-school approach to writing, therefore, to tackle this. You ensured that this started in the early years. We saw together children in the Reception Year acting out verbs such as 'pouncing' and then 'tiptoeing' back to their desks. Teachers also encourage children in the early years to practise their sentences aloud and to add detail to them before writing them down. Most pupils now have a clearer understanding of the features of different types of writing than they did and can confidently use and name correct grammatical terminology. Pupils' writing is improving as a result. For example, a pupil in Year 4 used descriptive and metaphorical language learned in the lesson when writing, 'as the crystal-clear sky had disappeared and turned into a lava-orange sunset'. The school's data indicates that current pupils are on track to make progress in line with national expectations in writing this year. Middle-ability pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, however, are not all making the progress of which they are capable. You are aware that leaders need to check the progress of these pupils closely and regularly so that staff can take action to ensure that they all make consistently good progress.

Over the last few years, pupils' attendance has been below the national average. You acknowledge that the level of persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains too high, despite the actions you have taken. You employed a family support worker in September 2016 to tackle this problem and to work with these pupils and their families to improve attendance. The number of pupils arriving late to school has reduced as a result. You have plans to use additional government funding this year to help improve pupils' attendance further by providing transport to school. The pupils who I spoke with clearly understood the importance of good attendance. They told me that the weekly celebration and reward for good attendance, which you have introduced, has been an effective motivator to encourage all pupils to be in school every day.

Safeguarding is effective.

You are the designated safeguarding leader, and you are supported in this role by two other senior leaders. You are all suitably trained and keep your knowledge current through regular online updates. Leaders and the governing body complete annual audits to check that safeguarding arrangements continue to be robust. All statutory checks on staff are carried out and recorded carefully. Records are detailed and of high quality. All staff receive regular and appropriate training and have a good understanding of their responsibilities to ensure children's safety and well-being. The files you showed me indicate that staff make prompt referrals when they have any concerns and that leaders are vigilant in following up with external agencies any further action needed. You also run weekly '60 Seconds of Safeguarding' updates for all staff, to ensure that pupils' safety rightly remains a high priority.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. You have provided opportunities for them to learn about issues such as e-safety. Pupils say bullying is rare and, if it does happen, they trust staff to deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils told me how the school teaches them to be respectful and tolerant of differences.

One pupil said, 'everyone accepts you for who you are'. This means that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Inspection findings

- The governing body provides you with effective support and challenge. Governors acknowledge that pupils' attendance, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, has not been good enough. They recognise that they continue to have a critical role in ensuring that all pupils' attendance improves.
- Leaders maintain a close focus on teaching and learning. This reflects the school's commitment to ongoing improvement and support for new teachers and subject leaders. Teachers work together to share best practice and to support and coach each other.
- You work with staff from other local schools to ensure that your assessments are accurate. You also use the expertise of a teacher within school, who is a local authority moderator, to work with staff and check that their assessments of pupils are accurate. Teachers use assessment information about pupils to plan learning that takes most pupils on from what they already know and can do, including effective challenge for the most able pupils. Leaders regularly check assessment information and provide timely intervention for any pupil who is falling behind. Leaders have identified that middle-ability pupils, including middle-ability disadvantaged pupils, are not making enough progress by the end of key stage 2 in writing. You have put additional intervention in place to support improvement in this area. It is too early to judge the impact of this yet.
- Pupils' written work is celebrated on classroom walls. This means that pupils have a clear understanding of what good writing looks like. Leaders and teachers have created a purposeful atmosphere of learning in lessons. Pupils are clear about what they are learning and are therefore swift to start work and to move between tasks. This enables pupils to build successfully on their prior knowledge and make good progress.
- Teachers are quick to address any misconceptions which pupils have in lessons and to reshape their learning to remedy them. For example, during the inspection, we saw together pupils using a thesaurus to develop their vocabulary. The teacher then used the examples found by pupils to explain carefully the importance of checking that alternative words still made sense in the context of the original sentence.
- Leaders ensure that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, have high aspirations. You have organised visits to Northampton University for pupils to work on 'challenge' projects. Staff encourage the most able pupils to develop their artistic and sporting talents, as well as their academic skills.
- A small number of the parents who responded to Ofsted's free text service expressed dissatisfaction about how quickly the school responds to any concerns they may have. Leaders and governors remain committed to continuing to improve communication with parents, through initiatives such as weekly

newsletters and updates on the school website.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they identify carefully which middle-ability pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are at risk of underachievement and, through improved teaching and a programme of support where it is needed, take action to accelerate their progress
- they quickly implement the school's plans to reduce pupils' persistent absence, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and check regularly that their actions are having the desired effect.

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

Yours sincerely

Sally Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with you, other senior leaders and governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I also spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone. Inspectors spoke with parents before school and a group of pupils in Year 6 about their school experience. Inspectors visited a range of classes; all were seen jointly with senior leaders. During these visits, inspectors sampled pupils' books and talked with pupils to evaluate the quality of their learning. Inspectors also looked at a sample of pupils' writing books from Years 2 and 6. In addition, the inspection team scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the school's record of safeguarding recruitment checks on staff. Inspectors evaluated the school's information about pupils' attainment, progress and attendance, and reviewed documentation about the school's own evaluation of its work, improvement plans, and minutes of meetings of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the 33 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 30 responses from parents to the Ofsted free text service. The 46 responses to the staff survey and the 35 responses from pupils to Ofsted's online survey were also considered.