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Sally Hunt
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Dear Mrs Hunt

Short inspection of Berry Hill 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 April 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your arrival in September 2016 was preceded by a period of change during 2015 to 2016. A new governing body formed in March 2016. Since your appointment, you have strengthened collaborative working with neighbouring schools. This has brought a renewed focus on improving outcomes for pupils. Your vision for continuous improvement and your meticulous approach in holding staff to account for their performance in raising standards further are highly valued by the school community. Berry Hill's values of creating 'successful learners, confident individuals, and responsible citizens' are embodied in pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school, which are supported well by all staff.

Together with governors, you regularly check on the work of the school. External consultants and the local authority assure the accuracy of these judgements. You use this information effectively to check that good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Further improvement priorities include increasing the level of challenge, especially for the most able, and improving the provision in the early years to enhance learning.

You have successfully developed a supportive culture. You encourage teachers to try out new ideas to further improve teaching and thereby raise achievement. Through close collaboration, teachers have developed activities that extend pupils' skills in speaking and listening and improve the quality of their writing, an area for

improvement from the previous inspection. Teachers also willingly share their skills more widely, such as your special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) providing support to another school.

Your new, improved tracking system enables teachers and leaders to monitor progress more effectively. The system gives clear information, is well used, and staff are gaining confidence that it gives a more accurate picture of pupil achievement. You agree that there is room for further improvement to challenge the most able even more and increase the depth of learning for the younger pupils.

Parents are extremely pleased with the quality of education you provide, particularly the care that their children receive during their time at the school. The overwhelming majority of parents spoken to at the school gate said, 'the school is fabulous' and they would recommend the school. This confirms the school's own questionnaire results. The school is the centre of a community in which staff and parents work well together to improve educational outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have successfully created a culture of safeguarding in the school. All staff, including governors, have completed safeguarding training to an appropriate level. Any safeguarding concerns about a child are recorded clearly, suitably detailed and of high quality. Staff understand their shared responsibility to keep children safe. Pupils are confident and have a good understanding of keeping themselves safe when meeting strangers, using computers and using roads and footpaths. Pupils confirmed this and parents are confident their children are safe at school. You are working to ensure that the car parking arrangements and fencing around the school are improved to increase pupil safety.

Pupils feel safe in school and enjoy their school life. They have a good understanding of the different types of bullying and say it is rare. When pupils use 'unkind words' that are reported to an adult, teachers sort this out quickly and stop it from happening again. Pupils who have medical needs are exceptionally well supported at this school. Staff are trained appropriately in providing first aid and delivering emergency medication when required. These pupils are always included in every school trip or visit and detailed risk assessments for activities are included within their care plans. Parents appreciate this extra care provided for their children.

Inspection findings

- We agreed that a line of enquiry would be looking at what the school is doing to raise pupils' progress across key stage 2 and especially for high attainers in writing and middle-ability pupils in mathematics.
- Teachers are now placing a stronger focus on problem solving in mathematics and promoting writing skills at every opportunity. You agreed that there are still further opportunities to stretch and challenge more pupils, especially the most able.
- During this inspection, I looked into the quality of pupils' writing because this was

an area for improvement identified at the previous inspection. In 2016, all pupils in key stage 2 reached expected levels and the proportion reaching higher standards was in line with national averages. Last year, pupils' outcomes at key stage 1 in writing were not as good as expected. Pupils said that writing lessons have improved and they enjoy them much more than previously. Pupils' work showed some good examples of writing across the curriculum. Pupils' work in books, discussions with the leaders and the current assessment data all show that you are successfully improving the achievement of pupils currently in Year 2. In addition, the work carried out to improve teaching across school is ensuring that the previous Year 2 pupils, now in Year 3, are back on track.

- Together we looked at how effectively school leaders ensure that a greater proportion of pupils reach expected standards by the end of Reception. The enthusiastic leader in the early years has brought a radical transformation to the learning environment. Children in the Reception class now get off to a flying start because of improved transition arrangements with pre-school providers and the planned home visits. Children enter the school with skills lower than expected in language development and physical handling skills, especially boys. The classroom and outdoor area has well-considered, high-quality resources, which interest and engage the children. For example, the construction area is filled with resources to develop writing such as 'order requests' and 'delivery notes'. As a result of these actions, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development, including disadvantaged pupils and boys, by the end of early years, is rising.
- Improvements to phonics teaching and your insistence on regular and effective phonics sessions, especially in the early years, is paying dividends. This was followed as a line of enquiry as part of this inspection. Disadvantaged pupils' and boys' standards in phonics are rising and this is reflected in their reading and ability to tackle unknown words in texts. Pupils in key stage 2, especially in Years 5 and 6, are passionate about reading and appreciate the wealth of high-quality books from which they have to choose. At key stage 2, pupils speak confidently about their favourite authors, for example, Michael Morpurgo and Roald Dahl.
- In our initial meeting, we agreed that attendance would be a key line of enquiry. Attendance for the last academic year was in line with the national average, though the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was below the national average. A high percentage of these pupils were in both groups. Staff, especially the family support worker and the SENCo, keep a close eye on vulnerable pupils who are absent more than others and ensure that there is effective support on their return to school, as well as working with families to reduce this absence rate. As a result, the levels of absence have reduced. This demonstrates well the successful collaboration created between the school's staff and pupils' families.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is tracked and monitored well. Leaders and teachers have a secure understanding of what strategies are required to help disadvantaged pupils to progress and achieve as well as other pupils nationally. In 2016, the progress made by most disadvantaged pupils was good. Currently, disadvantaged pupils are also progressing well and the quality of their work is good; for example, the standards they achieve in writing and

reading continue to be secure.

- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was also a focus for this inspection. We examined books belonging to pupils across the school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and it was clear that they have made good progress from their starting points. Pupils with an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs have individual learning programmes that ensure that they make strong progress. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a strength of the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching provides greater challenge for all pupils, especially the most able in mathematics and writing
- the school continues to work with the local authority to improve car parking arrangements to increase further the safety of pupils at the beginning and end of the school day.

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

Yours sincerely

Terry Mortimer
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I had meetings with you, your special educational needs coordinator, early years leader and other members of staff. I also met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View; however, parents' opinions were sought when they brought their children to school. We visited all the classrooms together with the SENCo to observe and speak with pupils about their learning. We scrutinised writing, mathematics and English books from pupils in all classes. A wide range of documentation and information relating to your self-evaluation, school improvement planning, equalities, assessment, monitoring and evaluation, and safeguarding were also examined.