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Mrs Rachael Johnston  
Headteacher  
Bottisham Primary School  
Beechwood Avenue  
Bottisham  
Cambridge  
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Dear Mrs Johnston

### **Short inspection of Bottisham Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education at the school since the previous inspection. Since taking up the post of acting headteacher in September 2016, you have rightly won the respect of parents and staff. You have worked effectively with other school leaders, including governors, to maintain a welcoming and nurturing school community where staff feel well supported and pupils feel safe and learn well.

Along with other leaders, including governors, you have ensured that standards overall have remained high. You also have an accurate understanding of the school's current performance and have detailed plans to improve aspects of the school's work that you judge to require further improvement in order to raise achievement. For example, you have identified that progress in mathematics is a relative weakness and are taking action to improve the quality of teaching and learning in this area.

You are fully supported in your work by staff and governors. They are committed to implementing the changes necessary to ensure that the school continues to thrive. Teachers share your enthusiasm to further improve teaching and value the support that you provide for them to develop their knowledge and skills. Good training, and regular opportunities to learn from each other by observing teaching and learning in other classrooms, are helping to improve teaching and raise standards.

Staff said that professional development was used well to encourage, challenge and support teachers' improvement. You also make regular checks on the quality of teaching through observations in classrooms to check on how well pupils are learning and ensure that all pupils receive the help they need to achieve their potential.

At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors reported that teaching was good and enabled pupils to achieve well in their learning. The report also made reference to strong leadership at the school and pupils' good behaviour. The areas for improvement that were identified all related to making further improvements to teaching and learning so that they are typically outstanding rather than good. You acknowledge that, although there is some outstanding teaching, this is not yet consistent across the school. However, your improvement plans and high expectations have already secured improvements and there is a shared commitment to making the school the best it can be.

Staff and parents are fully supportive of your leadership. All members of staff who responded to the questionnaire said that leaders do all they can to ensure that the school has a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff. Every parent who responded to Parent View said that the school is well led and managed. All parents also said that their children are happy in school. One of the parents who responded to Parent View stated, 'Bottisham Primary School is a friendly school where children are well cared for and stretched in their learning.'

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose, and that records are detailed and accurate. School leaders, including governors, ensure that rigorous checks are made on all adults who work in the school. They also ensure that staff receive regular training and fully understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe. Systems and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure that best practice is maintained. As a result of these actions, pupils say that they feel safe while in school and all of the parents who responded to Parent View agreed.

## Inspection findings

- In order to check whether the school remains good, I followed a number of lines of enquiry. The first was to see whether pupils were making good progress in their reading. The reason for looking at this area was that the results of the Year 1 phonics check were below the national average in both 2015 and 2016. The second area I considered was mathematics. I focused on this area as the school's most recent assessment information indicated that some pupils, particularly girls, were not making good progress across key stage 2. The third line of enquiry was to see whether the school is doing enough to promote good attendance, as the data for 2016 showed that a number of pupils were persistently absent from school, so I needed to look at what the school was doing to encourage good attendance. The final line of enquiry was to see whether pupils were making good progress across a wide range of subjects. This was to establish whether or not the school is improving and moving towards outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy school. They attend regularly and wear their uniforms with pride. They have good attitudes to learning and are respectful towards each other and the adults who teach them. They benefit from an attractive, orderly and well-resourced school environment, both indoors and outside in the extensive and well-maintained school grounds. The quality of pupils' work, displayed in corridors and classrooms, is impressive, inspired by a wide range of subjects and topics.
- Over the past two years, the phonics results at the end of Year 1 have been below the national average. However, you are aware of this issue and have put strategies in place that are already having an impact. Additional support is provided for pupils who failed the check and almost all of the Year 2 pupils who re-sat the tests in 2016 were successful. The school's records indicate that the percentage of pupils who will pass the check in 2017 will be above the national average.
- Despite previous weaknesses in the teaching of phonics, reading is a strength of the school. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Many pupils read widely and often. Those who met with the inspector during this inspection demonstrated a good knowledge of children's fiction and different authors. At the end of Year 6, in 2016, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard was above the national average, as was the percentage working at greater depth.
- You recognise that improvements are required to the teaching of mathematics and have put good plans in place to improve outcomes. You have ensured that teachers have been provided with support through coaching and training. The work seen in books during this inspection indicated that pupils are increasingly being provided with greater levels of challenge during lessons and are making good progress as a result. However, more work is needed to ensure that all year groups benefit from these improvements.

- School leaders have taken effective action to address concerns about the attendance of some pupils who have been persistently absent from school in the recent past. You worked with the education welfare officer to track the attendance of these pupils more closely and have made clear to parents the importance of regular attendance. Good attendance is now celebrated and attendance figures are regularly shared with parents. The approach you adopted has been successful and has significantly reduced the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school.
- The school has a well-planned curriculum that provides pupils with the opportunity to study a wide range of subjects. However, too often teachers fail to use subjects such as geography and science to develop pupils' writing skills and their use of mathematics.
- The school provides a wide range of learning opportunities for pupils, both within the classroom and through the many educational trips and visits that are organised. The school makes good use of local museums and places of interest. Pupils in Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 all have the opportunity to take part in residential visits, during which they have the opportunity to take part in activities such as field studies, team-building and archery. These experiences make a valuable contribution to pupils' good attitudes to learning.
- Governance is effective. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and understand its strengths and the areas that require improvement. They share the leadership team's ambitions to improve the school further. Governors are often involved in school life and make regular checks on key aspects of the school's work such as the safeguarding records.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- ensure that recent improvements in the teaching of mathematics are embedded across the school
- provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing and use of mathematics in the wider curriculum
- improve pupils' handwriting and presentation.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher and the mathematics leader. I also met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a group of pupils from Year 6. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I also scrutinised a range of documents, policies and assessment information. I made short visits to all classrooms to observe teaching and learning and looked at the work in pupils' books. I also considered responses from parents and staff to Ofsted questionnaires.