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Mrs Sandra Finney
Headteacher
Great Budworth CofE Primary School
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Dear Mrs Finney

Short inspection of Great Budworth CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 March 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 June 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education since the last inspection. You and your staff have sustained the strengths of a friendly school that provides a close-knit community in which pupils feel secure. On entry to the school, a colourful model of an African rhino stands waist-high to greet visitors while photographs of past pupils adorn the walls, reflecting the pride that staff have in the pupils. This is reciprocated by pupils, who value the support and guidance provided by staff. The extra classroom that has been built since the last inspection adds to the bright, colourful and nurturing environment that you have created. Pupils enjoy their work and are articulate and respectful. When I asked them what they would like to improve at the school they struggled to think of anything at all!

Leaders and governors have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have taken effective action to address the lower than expected standards experienced last year. This has been achieved by tackling the weakest teaching. Parents are generally supportive, but some express anxiety about how the new leadership arrangements may affect the school's culture. Your appointment as the headteacher of Antrobus St Mark's CofE Primary as well as Great Budworth CofE Primary is developing collaboration between both schools and is having a positive impact on school improvement. However, these strengths are not always communicated well to parents, who would like more information about the work of the school. Although the school has been slow to implement the new curriculum, the action subsequently taken has ensured that the progress of pupils is now good.

The sharing of good practice between the two schools has contributed to this development.

At the last inspection you were asked to improve a number of aspects of school provision. You now have a more precise system to track pupils' progress so that you can identify any underperformance. These tracking arrangements allow teaching assistants to be distributed in a more focused way, ensuring that pupils are supported to catch up where necessary. These actions are effectively helping to increase the rate of progress for targeted pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Staff have a good awareness of safeguarding issues and value the regular updates that you provide. Governors are trained in the safer recruitment of staff and comprehensive checks are carried out on the appointment of new staff. Staff who are new to the school comment favourably on the information that they are provided with on induction. The culture of the school is one of constant vigilance. Pupils recognise this and are emphatically positive in their response when asked if they feel safe in school.

Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe. They display a very good awareness of bullying, which they say is rare because staff remedy any poor behaviour fairly and swiftly. School records reflect this and during the inspection pupils' behaviour was impeccable. The focus of anti-bullying week every year keeps pupils constantly reminded of how to keep themselves safe and they have a very good awareness of the steps that they need to take when keeping themselves safe online.

Inspection findings

- We agreed at the start of the inspection that two areas for improvement identified at the last inspection would form key lines of enquiry for this inspection. One of these was how leaders are improving achievement in mathematics. The work in pupils' books shows that pupils now make good progress. You have brought about improvement by tracking accurately pupils' next steps and, as a result, the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils are continually provided with challenges that extend their learning. The work in pupils' books shows a structured progression in learning that deepens pupils' understanding through frequent opportunities to solve problems. Pupils said that they felt appropriately challenged and in Years 5 and 6 they can clearly articulate how to solve equations involving algebra. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work. Teachers have implemented the new curriculum successfully but the work done by leaders to monitor the quality of teaching and learning is variable and does not always provide teachers with the next steps to improve their performance.
- We agreed that another line of enquiry was to see how consistently learning activities are matched to the needs of all pupils. Although pupils work at different

levels of complexity, different groups of pupils make similar progress from their starting points. You have restructured the curriculum so that pupils have opportunities to consolidate their learning before moving on to new content. This was evident in Year 3 and Year 4 when pupils used drama to understand direct speech prior to recording this in their books. The most able pupils' work displayed a strong grasp of how to use language for effect as well as the correct use of punctuation. Pupils' work was brought to life as characters 'whined', 'shouted', 'uttered' and 'cried'. Of the work seen, pupils' handwriting was neat and precise. The most able pupils enjoy the challenges that deepen their understanding and skills such as problem-solving in their mathematics work. The resources used to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities structure their learning so that they achieve similar rates of progress as other groups of pupils. Improved tracking of pupils' progress identifies when pupils are at risk of underperformance. Groups and individual pupils are provided with extra support designed to help them to catch up with others. However, planned interventions to support pupils' learning are not always evaluated clearly enough by leaders.

- The final line of enquiry for the inspection was to see how effectively leaders and governors used the additional funding to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The rates of progress for these pupils from their starting points are good and there is little variation from other groups of pupils in the school. This is evident in their writing and mathematics work. Adults provide effective support for these pupils. Teaching assistants are effective in restructuring work to develop pupils' understanding. Occasionally, time is set aside to support these pupils' learning. The employment of a part-time teacher also provides specific support for small groups of pupils in receipt of this funding. Governors are well informed about the actions taken to support these pupils but they are not fully aware of the impact of the funding on pupils' progress. Leaders do not fully evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used to support pupils. The funding is also used to ensure that the wider opportunities of school life are accessible to all pupils. In this respect, governors have a clear understanding of the impact on individual pupils. They recognise the increased confidence and self-esteem that pupils gain from the instrumental music lessons that the fund provides for them.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is evaluated more precisely in terms of the impact it has on outcomes for pupils
- leaders and governors question further the impact of interventions to support pupils' learning and to evaluate their effectiveness
- leaders' monitoring provides teachers with next steps on how to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning
- systems of communication, including the school website, are used to keep parents informed of the work of the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education

for the Diocese of Chester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cheshire West and Chester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Bentham
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- I met with leaders and governors to discuss safeguarding and aspects of school leadership and management.
- I visited all classes along with the headteacher and spoke to pupils informally during lessons about their work.
- I reviewed documentation about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- I discussed a range of topics about school provision with pupils, both formally and informally.
- I watched pupils at playtime and reviewed arrangements for safeguarding.
- I conducted a scrutiny of pupils' books in mathematics and writing.
- I reviewed documentation which included the monitoring of teaching and learning, governors' minutes, the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and the school development plan.
- Thirty-seven responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were received.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the school's most recent assessment results, complaints procedure, the use of the pupil premium grant, the sports grant or accessibility plan on its website.