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Mr Dave Killoran  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Killoran

### **Short inspection of Bishopsteignton School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 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 March 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You lead the school with determined conviction. This is because you are uncompromising in your mission to raise the achievement of all pupils in your school. You combine this approach with an analytical, objective view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, you are clear about what needs to be done and take swift, decisive action to establish improvements. For example, you made it a priority at the beginning of this academic year to ensure that more pupils work at greater depth. Governors are aware of this priority and staff have collectively implemented strategies to ensure that pupils' learning is increasingly secure.

Leadership has been strengthened because you have shared responsibility for improving aspects of the school's work among other staff. Middle leaders have risen to this challenge and relish opportunities to exercise initiative, work collaboratively and try out new ideas. They have valued working with you to answer the question, 'what does good teaching look like?' As a result, their collective work is improving the quality of teaching across the school so that more is outstanding. This was an area for improvement that emerged from the last inspection. You and middle leaders now ensure that monitoring information is better used to promote actions which have the greatest impact on improving teaching. Furthermore, teachers and other adults are focused on ensuring that time in lessons is maximised to enable pupils to make good progress.

You are also working constructively with governors to ensure that they have the appropriate skills and expertise to help you take the school forward. As a result, governors are using performance information and the findings of external advisers to help frame questions that hold you to account. However, governors themselves acknowledge that they need to develop their skills further to play a greater strategic role in the school's development.

Growing strengths in leadership have helped to foster a culture in which learning is celebrated as an exciting, communal activity. For example, curriculum topics such as, 'A picture is worth a thousand words' present numerous opportunities for learning across subjects. Staff plan these topics with pupils, all of whom, from the early years to Year 6, study the topics at the same time. As a result, the curriculum, alongside the teaching pupils receive, helps them to develop positive attitudes to learning. The dynamic and purposeful learning environment also promotes positive attitudes to learning. This is because classroom displays act as an engaging resource which helps pupils to develop skills and acquire knowledge.

Pupils achieve well as they move up through the school. In the early years the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is consistently above average over time. Children also achieve well in the national phonics check. This success provides pupils with a good foundation for their learning. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement in all their subjects is at least in line with national averages.

In the short time you have been in post you have made key changes. These have been made in order to improve pupils' experience of learning and ensure they make greater progress. However, some parents who have responded to the online survey, Parent View do not currently have a positive view of some aspects of the school's work.

At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. These included establishing the effectiveness of actions taken to improve achievement at key stage 1, particularly for pupils with middle prior attainment. We also considered to what extent absence is being reduced for different groups of pupils and whether safeguarding is effective. These lines of enquiry are considered below under 'Safeguarding' and 'Inspection findings'.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. This is because you have established a culture in which staff know it is important that information and concerns are shared. Staff feel comfortable using the school's system to record concerns. This system, combined with regular monitoring, enables you and the deputy safeguarding lead to keep track of, and resolve, any potential issues. You are committed to securing support from outside agencies when necessary to keep children safe.

You ensure that all staff are appropriately trained and checks are in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Governors involved in recruitment have also been trained to ensure that new staff joining the school meet suitability requirements. Visitors are clear about child protection expectations when they enter the school. Furthermore, parents are provided with useful safeguarding information when necessary, through newsletters and the high-quality website.

Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe, both in school and online. This is, in part, because pupils are taught about e-safety in assemblies and because visitors such as police representatives visit school to speak to the pupils. Pupils who spoke to me were able to talk with confidence about the dangers of sharing personal information online. For example, one pupil pointed out the risk associated with posting a photograph online that shows a child standing in front of their home. The pupil stated sensibly that posting a photograph like this was not advisable because it might identify where someone lives.

Pupils feel safe in school. One pupil commented, 'there is always someone to protect you'. Nearly all parents who responded to the Parent View survey agreed that their child was safe in school and well looked after.

### **Inspection findings**

- You and the key stage 1 learning lead are aware that the quality of teaching at key stage 1 has been inconsistent. Leaders have been quick to take action to tackle this because you both have high expectations and will not settle for second best. As a result of you providing the necessary support and challenge to staff, pupils are being supported to make better progress.
- Staff use assessment confidently in order to measure and monitor the progress pupils make. They are aware of how pupils need to improve their work and provide useful feedback to this effect. Furthermore, pupils are provided with opportunities to respond to this feedback, to identify their mistakes and act on the advice they receive. This helps them to improve their work.
- Pupils are increasingly provided with work that is matched to their needs. This is most evident in the tasks of varying difficulty which have different levels of challenge built into them. Each level of difficulty is associated with a different colour. For example, the most difficult tasks, which encourage pupils to work at greater depth, are purple. Pupils are encouraged to attempt tasks that challenge them to think more deeply. This system is helping to ensure that pupils, particularly the most able and middle-ability pupils, are being pushed to make more rapid progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils, many of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well supported to make good progress. Skilled teaching assistants provide tailored support, both in and outside of the classroom, to help pupils catch up by reinforcing or extending their learning. Additional funding also helps staff to run the 'Thrive' programme, which supports pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural needs. The programme helps pupils to become more ready for learning.

- You monitor the progress being made by disadvantaged pupils closely. This is because you are keenly aware that they face specific barriers to learning that require a concerted effort from all staff to overcome. This monitoring of progress is enabling staff to provide timely and appropriate support.
- Overall attendance is broadly in line with average and has been so consistently over time. Historically, attendance for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been in the bottom 10% of schools. Current information shows that attendance for these groups is improving and is much closer to the national average.
- Attendance is improving because close, regular monitoring is enabling staff to identify patterns of low attendance early. Staff are working closely with parents to establish expectations and provide support. For example, when talking to parents and pupils about attendance, you will remind pupils about the positive experiences they have when they are in school. When necessary, you work successfully with the education welfare officer to help reduce the absence of persistent absentees.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- action continues to be taken to ensure that teaching in key stage 1 is consistently good and enables pupils to make the progress they are capable of
- governors continue to develop their skills in order to play a more strategic role in the school's future development
- action is taken to engage all parents in the work of the school, including those who are not currently fully satisfied.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Smith  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I spoke to you and another senior leader, who is also the deputy safeguarding lead. I also spoke to pupils, representatives of the governing body and the school improvement adviser.

You and I made visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning. We also scrutinised the work in pupils' books with the key stage 1 coordinator.

A range of documentary evidence was considered, which included the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, current progress information and attendance information. I also considered governing body meeting minutes and the school improvement adviser's notes of visit. In addition I scrutinised information about the suitability of staff to work with children and other safeguarding records.

In addition, I took account of 59 responses to the Parent View online survey.