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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Janet Seddon
Beech Hill Community Primary School
Netherby Road
Beech Hill
Wigan
Lancashire
WN6 7PT

Dear Mrs Seddon

Short inspection of Beech Hill Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 May 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 are an inspirational leader who effectively serves the school and community of Beech Hill. Your devotion to all in the school is returned by the complete trust and confidence of your staff, pupils and the parental community. The school community you have created is one in which all staff and pupils feel valued, respected and understand what is expected of them. Your team pull together with a strong, dedicated work ethic and high expectations for good learning. This is evident in pupils' excellent attitudes, which have a significant impact on the good progress that they make. Strong relationships between staff and pupils are apparent in every class. This supports pupils' confidence to learn and promotes high standards of behaviour. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and always try to do their very best in lessons. You are rightly proud of the positive attitudes and performance of your pupils.

Year after year you have improved all aspects of the school. The school is very well placed to improve further. You and your leadership team have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of your school. Development planning focuses on the current priorities for improvement, which are shared and understood by all staff and governors. Staff and pupils respond well to the challenges. This means that pupils make good progress at all phases of the school. They get off to a good start in the early years. They build on this at key stage 1 and by the end of key stage 2 they are achieving at least in line with other pupils nationally.

In preparation for the leadership of the new headteacher from September 2017, you have worked hard to upskill leaders in all phases of the school. In recent times your deputy headteacher has developed significantly in her role as acting headteacher during the period in which you have stepped down to working three days a week. You have inspired other leaders and consequently they show great confidence in their roles. As a result, they have all made improvements in their specific areas of responsibility.

I should say how impressed I was with the quality of the school building. It provides a wonderful space for the pupils to learn in and is appreciated by all of the school community. Staff take great pride in creating an orderly, safe and inviting place for pupils to work. At the start of the school day staff are ready to welcome the pupils and their parents. The open door policy is much appreciated by parents. For example, parents enjoyed supporting their children in the early years on a range of activities. As one parent said, 'They set the children high expectations which, as a parent, is exactly what I want.' Your pupils are well behaved, polite and, like their parents, they are proud of this school.

Safeguarding is effective.

It is clear that you place the highest priority on keeping your pupils safe. The school is vigilant about health and safety on the premises and parents are confident that their children are safe. The pastoral team manager is totally dedicated to ensuring that pupils are secure in their understanding that all staff are there to take care of them. Further, she is committed to ensuring that pupils understand and take responsibility for looking after themselves and each other. Safeguarding is threaded throughout the curriculum and the day-to-day running of the school. As 'buddies' and 'playground leaders', older pupils have significant roles in ensuring that the younger pupils feel safe and secure each and every day.

The school provides a high level of care and assistance to pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. Staff work closely with families whose children are in need of extra support and links with other professions are strong in helping to keep pupils safe. The school does not hesitate to make referrals following any concerns about individual pupils. Your staff apply their child protection training in practice and are vigilant in recording any concerns they have regarding child protection. Governors are equally committed in their role: they work to ensure that recruitment procedures follow the Department for Education guidance and that the school makes all of the statutory checks on new staff to ensure their suitability to work with children.

Inspection findings

- Areas for improvement at the last inspection were to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and improve the quality of the curriculum. During the inspection we visited lessons, looked at pupils' books and considered the checks that leaders make in their specific areas of responsibilities. The quality of work

is at least good, with a number of examples of outstanding practice. For instance, Year 6 pupils made significant progress in developing descriptive language due to the quality of the teacher's subject knowledge and the creative use of 'B Pods' (information technology) to check pupils' progress. Year 4 pupils were engaged throughout a poetry lesson. The passion with which they recited William Blake's poem 'Tiger, tiger' was wonderful to experience. Pupils had equal enthusiasm in their mathematics lessons. Their books show that they are systematically asked to apply their learning of new concepts in problem-solving and reasoning activities. Leaders regularly visit classrooms to check the quality of teaching and learning and find out what is working well. All staff work together to learn from each other in the drive to secure outstanding teaching and learning throughout the school.

- Reading has been a priority for the school, particularly in the early years and key stage 1. The quality of the early years has been sustained and in some respects improved. The environment both in the classroom and outdoor area is stimulating and supports early language development. During the inspection we observed phonics sessions where the teachers were very skilled at ensuring that the children were able to say key sounds and then link them to key words and basic sentences. For example, one group focused on the sound 'sh' linked it to key words such as 'ship' and 'shop'. They were then asked to write the words and the most able were encouraged to write a basic sentence. The quality of these experiences is paying dividends, with increasing numbers expected to achieve the expected standard in the year 1 phonics screening check this year. Overall the school continues to perform well in reading at both key stages 1 and 2.
- You explained what the school is doing to improve the performance of the most able girls. In the early years and key stage 1 girls make good progress. However, by the end of Year 6 the most-able do not always achieve the standard they are capable of because, on occasion, the work they are asked to do does not match their abilities. Together with other leaders, you analyse assessment information thoroughly and have sensible plans to address this relative weakness.
- Pupils appreciate the exciting learning opportunities that you and your team provide. They enjoy their topic work, which links subjects appropriately, and they get many opportunities to write in detail across a range of subjects. Pupils are asked to reflect on moral issues and learn about other faiths and cultures. However, this does not extend to visiting faith and culture settings. This limits their appreciation of how people with different cultural and faith backgrounds live day to day in modern Britain.
- The school community is very inclusive and you have worked relentlessly to ensure that communication with your governing body and parents is of a high standard. Governors are very appreciative of the information you provide to them which, they say, helps them in their role to support and challenge the school's leaders. Governors work as a team and are effective in their role. You ensure that parents are informed about all aspects of their children's work and progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the number of pupils, particularly girls, who achieve at above the expected level at the end of Year 6 rises
- there are more first-hand opportunities for pupils to learn about a range of faiths and cultures in modern Britain.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Morley
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Throughout the inspection I gathered a wide range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This included short observations of lessons in all classes, jointly with you. I observed pupils' behaviour, both in class and around the school. I listened to a Year 2 group of most-able and less-able readers. I considered a range of school documentation, including assessment information, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation documents. Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff and arrangements for e-safety (keeping children safe online when using electronic media). I checked the single central record of recruitment checks and other documentation relating to safeguarding. I met with three members of the governing body, including the chair, to discuss the work of the school since the previous inspection. I spoke on the telephone to an officer from the local authority to explore their view of the progress that the school is currently making. I spoke to some parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the day and looked at the school's own questionnaires of parents' views of the school.