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Mrs Barbara Mayer
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Mayer

Short inspection of Beckermest CofE 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 October 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 have redoubled your efforts to provide an education which develops pupils into well-rounded citizens and provides a firm grounding in academic success. Staff and governors share your high expectations and all are committed to achieve the best outcomes for your pupils. Parents appreciate how accessible you are to them and the way that any of their worries are quickly allayed. The result of your work is a school that is calm, welcoming and allows pupils to thrive.

Every pupil I spoke to said that they are happy in school. This view is supported by all of the parents I spoke to and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Teaching at Beckermest is characterised by strong relationships between staff and pupils. Staff know all pupils well and ensure that those who need extra support receive it quickly. Pupils get along very well together and are keen to see their friends succeed. Pupils who are new to the school settle in quickly and soon become part of the Beckermest 'family'. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. They are polite, well mannered and confident.

In the previous inspection, the inspector reported that teaching did not always move at a brisk enough pace and did not allow pupils to apply their learning quickly enough. In addition, teachers were not always clear in their explanations to pupils, and leaders did not always check the quality of teaching well enough. You have made the necessary improvements in the quality of teaching. Teachers'

explanations are now clear and pupils are quick to engage with their learning. You have also strengthened your monitoring of teaching to ensure that any new teaching methods are being adhered to across the school.

The previous inspector also noted that pupils in key stage 1 were not achieving the standards of which they were capable and that pupils who struggle were not always supported to catch up. Again, you have rectified these points. Pupils are now achieving well. In 2016, key stage 1 pupils' progress from starting points in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. Also, a higher than average proportion of pupils who struggled with reading and writing at the end of the early years were supported to catch up in 2016.

We discussed an area where further work is needed in your ongoing improvement. In mathematics, although pupils are making strong progress with their calculation skills, they do not have regular opportunities to solve problems and to use reasoning to explain their mathematical thinking.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that staff and governors are kept up to date with safeguarding training and changing government guidance. Staff are aware of procedures should they suspect that a child is at risk from harm. Where concerns are raised, you are quick to act and ensure that other agencies are involved to make sure that pupils are kept safe. Appropriate checks are completed on adults before they are free to work with pupils.

There is a caring ethos within the school and pupils say that they feel safe. This includes when they use the internet or mobile phones. Pupils are mindful of their responsibilities when using technology and are well aware of related issues, such as cyber bullying. Parents report that pupils are well looked after and are kept safe in school. Every parent who spoke to me and those who responded to Parent View share this view.

Inspection findings

- Pupils make strong progress in a wide range of subjects. Published information for pupils leaving key stages 1 and 2 in 2016 showed that pupils made strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in pupils' books shows that they make similar progress in other subjects such as history, geography and science. Pupils spoke to me at length about their learning. This included pupils' detailed knowledge of the Second World War, rivers and continents. Pupils also spoke excitedly about the range of sports activities they are involved in, and their progress and achievements in physical education.
- Pupils make strong progress with their mathematical fluency, enabling them to hone their calculation skills. Work in pupils' books shows that they are increasingly able to tackle more challenging calculations over time. However, pupils do not have regular opportunities to apply their strong mathematical knowledge to a range of problem-solving and reasoning tasks.

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points in the early years. Children have a broad mix of experiences before they join your Reception class. Some children join Reception with skills which are typical for their age, but the skills of many are lower than expected. Although fewer children than the national average achieved a good level of development in 2016, the progress children made from joining to leaving Reception was strong.
- In some classes, girls make stronger progress than boys. Although boys' progress is better than that of other boys nationally, you are keen to ensure that they make similar progress to the girls in your school. This is something you are already aware of and forms part of your improvement plan. You have considered the topics you teach in school and how such topics will engage the boys as well as girls. My observations confirmed that boys are well motivated to learn, are engaged and make good progress.
- In 2016, the attendance of some groups of pupils was too low. You have instigated numerous procedures to secure an improving picture. Classes receive weekly awards for the best attendance and pupils who secure high levels of attendance are rewarded at the end of each term. You have also stepped up your procedures in working with families who struggle to ensure that pupils attend regularly. You maintain regular contact and provide ongoing support and challenge to make sure that attendance improves. As a result of your actions, overall school attendance is higher and the attendance of groups of pupils is improving from last year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- pupils have more regular opportunities to apply their mathematics skills through more regular problem-solving and reasoning activities.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Hardman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the senior teacher. I met with three members of the governing body and spoke with a local authority adviser. I spoke with five parents who were arriving at school in the morning and considered the responses from 23 parents to Parent View. I visited three classrooms with you to observe and speak with pupils about their learning. We also scrutinised pupils' books from a range of subjects in the classes visited.

I considered a wide range of documentation and information relating to your self-evaluation, school improvement planning, attendance, governance, assessment and safeguarding.

The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.