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Mr Stuart Herrington
Principal
Bowling Park Primary School
New Cross Street
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Dear Mr Herrington

Short inspection of Bowling Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 2017 with Peter Heaton, Ofsted Inspector, 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 February 2013.

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 a very clear and accurate understanding of the changing needs of your school community. You know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have accurately identified how to strengthen the school further. You, your leadership team and governors are unwavering in your determination to ensure that every child is nurtured, cared for and inspired to learn. This is the mission and the driving force of the school. Together, you have all been successful in enabling pupils to overcome barriers to learning. You have raised their aspirations and improved their life chances.

Pupils are very happy in the school. They show respect for one another, work hard and are very well behaved. Parents are highly supportive of the school. This was reflected when one parent described the school as, 'a caring, stimulating environment'. They went on to say: 'The team consistently challenge my children to progress and achieve their potential. The teaching approaches are innovative and often result in my children bursting with enthusiasm to inform me about what they did in school today.'

You have tackled the areas identified to require improvement at the last inspection robustly. One of these related to increasing opportunities for pupils to solve mathematical problems. Mathematics is now an area of substantial strength. Pupils of all ages regularly and confidently tackle challenging problems. These problems

underpin pupils' strong mathematical development and rapid progress. Pupils carefully and skilfully explain the reasons behind their choices and thought processes.

You were also asked to improve further the quality of teaching and to ensure that the work given to the most able pupils is always hard enough. You have made significant improvements. In many classes, the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are working to a high standard and making good progress over time. The school is highly responsive to the developing strength of individual pupils as they overcome barriers. Staff act quickly to nurture emerging talent and ability. However, the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation is an area that needs further attention. Similarly, on occasions, children in the early years are not always stretched to make the best possible progress.

During my visit to the school, we agreed to check if the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remained good. It most definitely did. Pupils thrive and develop strong, supportive relationships with staff. Teachers' planning shows a great deal of thought. Interesting learning activities meet pupils' developmental needs and result in pupils making good progress from their individual starting points. I also checked the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils and included within this those who are vulnerable. Additional funding is well spent. You provide a range of rich opportunities for pupils to develop resilience and independence through trips and residential visits. High-quality teaching and small class sizes help pupils to make rapid progress in lessons and over time. Your team of mentors work closely with many pupils and their families. The mentors are highly valued and effective. They help families to access the support they need and help parents to support their children's learning and development.

Many pupils arrive at the school with little or no English and are welcomed by this inclusive school community. Some arrive with little prior educational experience and some have complex vulnerabilities. The provision you have made to integrate pupils quickly and to develop their language skills is highly effective.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders are knowledgeable and proactive in protecting pupils against all possible risks. They have ensured that the culture of safeguarding within the school is strong and that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Statutory guidelines are followed regarding policies and staff training. In addition, there are regular safeguarding updates. The leaders with specific responsibilities for safeguarding are vigilant in their care of vulnerable pupils who are at risk, maintain careful records and work closely with external agencies. Clear and robust systems are in place to check the suitability of prospective employees. Leaders track carefully pupils' attendance and work closely with families to ensure that attendance continues to improve. They are relentless in ensuring that no pupils are missing from education.

Pupils feel very safe in school and they were able to explain how they have been taught to keep themselves safe, for instance when using the internet. They say that

there is no bullying of any kind in the school, or derogatory language in any form.

Inspection findings

- Your strong, effective leadership, that of your senior team and the governing body was evident throughout the inspection. It was seen through your sheer determination to raise the aspirations and outcomes of pupils despite the significant and substantial challenges that so many face. Consequently, pupils thrive and achieve well during their time at Bowling Park.
- You, senior leaders and staff know the school well and your plans for development are astute and fit for purpose. Governors are knowledgeable and supportive. They add substantially to the overall leadership capacity of the school. They check for themselves how the school is doing and provide appropriate challenge to you and the senior team.
- Systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning are robust, enabling you to provide support for staff where this is needed. For example, you have provided staff with the training necessary to secure improvements in mathematics. You have altered your approach so that the subject is rooted in practical activities. Solving problems is embedded for all age groups. Rapid progress in mathematics is evident in pupils' work and in the results of key stage 2 tests in 2016. You work closely with partner schools to share good practice and check that your assessments of pupils' progress are accurate.
- Your tracking systems monitor carefully the progress of groups of pupils. Recent progress information, combined with work scrutiny, shows that good progress is being made by all groups of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. In the early years, children were observed making good progress from their different starting points, especially when working closely with their teachers. Children were not always given enough direction during structured play activities. This resulted, at times, in a lack of challenge.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work and other evidence during the inspection demonstrated clearly that standards are improving and rapid progress is being made across a very broad and balanced curriculum. It also showed that poor handwriting and untidy presentation of work was not challenged sufficiently because teachers' expectations, in this regard, are not high enough.
- Observations of pupils in lessons showed good attitudes to learning. Most pupils, particularly the most able, worked with resilience and independence. Pupils confidently asked and answered questions. Older pupils were acutely aware of the importance of their education for their future careers choices and many, rightly, have high aspirations.
- 'New to English' lessons give new arrivals to the country a much-needed platform from which to begin to access English and engage in learning. Highly skilled and specialist staff provide a secure environment for pupils to take these first steps.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- further accelerate the progress of children in the early years
- improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and the quality of the presentation of their work.

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

Yours sincerely

Janice Gorch
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with groups of parents at the beginning of the day. I met with you to discuss the school's effectiveness and improvements you had made since the last inspection. My colleague and I also met with senior and middle leaders throughout the day and spoke to three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I held a telephone conversation with your school improvement partner.

We read a range of documents including information about pupils' current progress, external evaluations of aspects of the school's work, minutes of meetings of the governing body and documents related to safeguarding.

Inspectors visited classes on both sites, accompanied by yourself or your deputies, in to order to observe teaching, learning and assessment. We also scrutinised pupils' work and listened to pupils read. We talked formally with a group of pupils from key stage 2 and informally with pupils in lessons and during playtime.

I took account of the 394 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, the 103 responses from the staff survey and 45 responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View.