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Ms Gillian Clubbs  
Headteacher  
New Bolsover Primary and Nursery School  
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Dear Ms Clubbs

### **Short inspection of New Bolsover Primary and Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 June 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 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Through your hard work and dedicated leadership, the school is in a stronger position than when it was last inspected and you have improved standards for children in all key stages. You have a clear vision and high aspirations for the school's future. There is a great desire to improve the school further and this is demonstrated by staff throughout the school. You and the deputy headteacher know the school well. You use accurate self-evaluation to identify clear priorities for the school improvement plan. This provides a focused set of actions and related success criteria by which improvement can be measured.

The school provides a warm and welcoming learning environment. Pupils' conduct is good, and their relationships with the adults in the school are strong. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and value the support they receive from their teachers and other adults. The pupils I spoke with were confident and polite. They told me that they enjoy their lessons because teachers make them fun and they believe that they learn a lot.

Pupils' progress has accelerated since the last inspection. Children in the Reception Year, who join the school with skills well below those typical for their age, made rapid progress and their attainment was well above the national average in 2016. The number of pupils passing the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) screening check was also above the national average in 2016, as was the

proportion of pupils reaching nationally expected levels and above at the end of key stage 1. Pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 was significantly above the national averages in reading and writing and was average in mathematics. Their attainment was also above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.

You have high expectations of staff and have recognised the importance of securing consistently high-quality teaching across the school. Areas for improvement, identified at the last inspection, have been tackled with success. Teachers now use pupils' assessment information to plan work that is better matched to pupils' abilities. The school's feedback policy is consistently used by all staff. Pupils told the inspector how useful this is in helping them extend their knowledge and deepen their understanding. Writing has improved throughout the school. Pupils are provided with opportunities to write at length and they take pride in what they are doing, which is reflected in the presentation of their work. You have also worked hard to improve attendance.

Despite the great success you have had in improving pupils' standards, you know there is still work to be done and you place a high importance on continued improvement. You recognise that the tracking of pupils' progress, from their different starting points, to identify any additional support or challenge that may be required, is at an early stage of development. You understand that teachers do not consistently use subject language to increase pupils' confidence in, and understanding of, their learning. You also acknowledge that some governors do not yet provide the high level of challenge and support needed to improve the effectiveness of the school further.

The role played by the governing body is not as effective as it might be. For example, the governing body is not sufficiently involved in constructing the school improvement plan or in checking the impact of the actions identified within it. Their work in supporting school leaders' communication and dealings with parents does not effectively help to strengthen parental links with the school. Most parents express good levels of satisfaction with the school's effectiveness; however, some do not share this view.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding is given the highest priority and it continues to be effective. Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe at school. The school's procedures for ensuring that pupils are safe have created a culture of care where safeguarding is seen as everyone's responsibility. Staff and volunteers are kept up to date about safeguarding matters through training and briefings. They understand how to deal with disclosures and operate the school's clear and straightforward procedure for reporting any concerns. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Concerns are followed up carefully and with consideration. Strong working relationships between the school, external agencies and the local authority are in place.

Parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View) and the school's own surveys, and those who were spoken with during the inspection, agreed that their children feel safe at school. A few parents, however, believe that some behaviour and bullying incidents are not dealt with as effectively as they could be. Pupils were clear that any instances of poor behaviour and the rare incidents of bullying are dealt with by adults quickly. School records show that appropriate action is taken and that instances of poor behaviour are reducing.

## **Inspection findings**

- In mathematics, senior leaders have introduced a school-wide focus on mastery. Staff use probing questions to draw out and deepen pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts and skills. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to develop problem-solving and reasoning skills which help to strengthen their understanding of the subject. However, teachers do not consistently make good use of their subject knowledge to extend pupils' vocabulary and consolidate their learning.
- Leaders have taken effective action to raise the standards reached by disadvantaged pupils. Leaders check disadvantaged pupils' progress closely, and carefully evaluate any support they are given. In phonics, the school's assessment information indicates that disadvantaged pupils are expected to reach higher standards this year and attain a similar standard to other pupils nationally. The difference in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school is also expected to reduce. The disadvantaged pupils I heard read did so with confidence and used their phonics skills effectively. They told me they enjoyed reading and all of them read every day. They did not, however, have a natural curiosity for learning the meaning of new words and expressions.
- The school's assessment information, and work seen in pupils' books, also indicate that disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders recognise, however, that a few inconsistencies remain in respect of disadvantaged pupils' attainment, and are taking effective action to iron out these dips.
- Senior leaders are unwavering in their efforts to improve the attendance of all pupils. Each pupil's attendance is tracked carefully and good use is made of different initiatives when necessary. Pupils' overall attendance has improved and is now above the national average. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance has also improved and the number of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent has fallen. There is still a little way to go, however, before disadvantaged pupils' attendance catches up with other pupils nationally.
- Although boys attain as well as other boys nationally, they have not kept up with girls in the school. Senior leaders have arranged timely interventions to tackle this. Boys enjoy the activities in which they take part. Their book work and discussions with the inspector reinforced this. Boys are now keeping up with the girls in some subjects.
- Teachers are challenging the most able pupils, including the most able

disadvantaged pupils, to reach higher standards. Prior learning is used effectively to inform teachers' planning and provide the most able pupils with harder work and extension activities. The school's assessment information indicates that many of the most able pupils are making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers consistently make use of subject-specific language, especially in mathematics, by providing opportunities for pupils to engage in discussions and consolidate their understanding
- the school's assessment systems, which measure pupils' progress, are refined so that leaders have an even more precise view of pupils' progress from their different starting points, and can thus provide pupils with any additional support or challenge they may need
- leaders continue to reduce the number of disadvantaged pupils who are absent so that their attendance at least matches the national average for all pupils
- the governing body develops its strategic role and sharpens its practice, especially in the areas of school improvement planning and in supporting senior leaders' work with parents.

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

Yours sincerely

Vondra Mays  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, the vice-chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. You and I made a series of visits to lessons. I examined samples of pupils' work and talked with pupils about their work. I also listened to some pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 read. I considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, records relating to pupils' attendance and information on pupils' attainment and progress. I looked at how effectively the pupil premium funding was being used. I also examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information. Safeguarding practices were also reviewed. I considered the views of 26 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey (Parent View), including 13 free-text responses, as well as the school's own parental surveys. I also spoke with parents at the start of the day.