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Mr Gary Bladon
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Dear Mr Bladon

Short inspection of Bampton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As headteacher, you have led with determination and vision through a period of change; there have been considerable changes in staffing since the previous inspection.

Leaders and staff across the federation work together constructively. Your liaison with other schools in the federation has made the monitoring of teaching and learning more effective. You have utilised support from outstanding schools so that you can focus on improvements in particular areas such as the teaching of writing. As a result, the quality of teaching over time has improved. Children learn to become confident, independent learners and to cooperate well with each other.

You, other leaders and governors are ambitious for the school to become outstanding, but recognise that further work needs to be done to achieve this. In the past, the support provided for some pupils, including middle-ability girls, was not making enough of a difference and gaps in pupils' attainment were not closing quickly enough. You and your leaders have taken decisive action to address this and are checking rigorously on the progress of girls. You are now targeting support more effectively to ensure that these pupils achieve as well as their classmates. The impact of this is evident in pupils' work.

At the previous inspection you were asked to strengthen pupils' ability to quickly

recall number facts and so improve their problem-solving skills as pupils move through the school. Your work in this regard is effective. An example of this is the priority that you have put on additional, specialist training for teachers in mathematics. You work closely with the other schools to provide coaching support and staff training. In the last year, this collaborative approach has improved the quality of mathematics teaching and has resulted in a more precise focus on raising the achievement of girls in mathematics across the school.

You were also asked to develop pupils' writing to ensure that improvements in pupils' spelling and punctuation skills are sustained and fully established to a high standard. Pupils' use of punctuation across key stage 2 has steadily improved and this is evident in their writing across all subjects. However, you agree that some aspects of writing development could be strengthened further, for example ensuring that pupils in key stage 2 are more accurate in their spelling.

Leaders throughout the school, including governors, are working on the right aspects for improvement. However, further work is required so that teachers respond swiftly to address any gaps in pupils' learning and misconceptions that arise, including in the teaching of spelling.

Safeguarding is effective.

The governing body is effective in promoting a positive safeguarding culture in the school. Staff and governors have received appropriate child protection training in accordance with the latest guidance from the Department for Education, 'Keeping children safe in education' (2016). As a result, they know how to spot signs of concern and the procedures to follow should a referral need to be made. Pupils are confident that staff listen to, and act on, any concerns. Incidents of bullying are very rare but, when they do occur, they are dealt with swiftly.

All staff training is up to date, including in the government's 'Prevent' duty to protect pupils from the risks of radicalisation and extremism. The school has carried out all the necessary checks on teachers and other staff to determine their suitability to work with children.

Inspection findings

To ascertain that the school remained good, we agreed to focus on four key lines of enquiry. The first focused on the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on the development of pupils' basic number skills.

- Teaching now places a much greater emphasis on problem-solving, reasoning and increasing the level of challenge for pupils. Pupils in key stage 2 are solving problems with increasing complexity, reflecting the raised expectations and greater challenge in the teaching of mathematics. They calculate with greater accuracy and their arithmetic is improving. In addition, teaching has been adapted to match the needs of girls more closely. Consequently, pupils across the school are now making good progress in mathematics.
- Pupils in key stage 1, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged,

make good progress in mathematics because their work is suitably challenging. They are able to articulate their ideas clearly and justify their responses, for example when choosing the most effective methods for adding and subtracting numbers. However, younger pupils in key stage 1 are less confident in solving simple problems.

Our second line of enquiry focused on the impact of leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning across school. This was because of a dip in the performance of girls in the most recent, published, national assessments.

- Historically, a legacy of weaker teaching has resulted in girls' underachievement in reading and mathematics. Recognising a need to improve this, you ensured a rigorous approach to monitor the progress of this group of pupils. Scrutiny of current pupils' work revealed no significant differences between the work of girls and boys. Most girls now progress well and a larger proportion are on track to achieve the expected standard at the end of this year. However, school leaders and teachers recognise that some pupils, including middle-ability girls, still have more ground to make up.
- Leaders' checks are effective in identifying how well specific groups of pupils are achieving. In-school assessment information is accurate. There is a drive from leaders to raise pupils' achievement, and governors hold the school to account well. Leaders are quick to address any weaknesses in teaching and learning affecting the progress of specific groups of pupils. Consequently, leaders' recent actions are making a difference and girls' achievement is rising.

Our third line of enquiry focused on the effectiveness of teaching in key stage 2, in particular the use of assessment information to ensure high standards in spelling and punctuation.

- School leaders have developed a culture of high expectations in writing, and this is evident both in pupils' literacy books and in their work in history, geography and science. Across all year groups, current pupils are achieving higher standards as a result of the improvements made to the quality of teaching. Current assessment of pupils' punctuation skills demonstrates that this is improving very quickly. However, some pupils' spelling is not as secure as their punctuation and this can undermine the quality of their work at times.
- Some teachers in key stage 2 do not use precise and timely assessment to address gaps in pupils' understanding of spelling patterns and rules. As a result, pupils in Years 5 and 6, in particular, have considerable ground to catch up. You acknowledge that teachers need to evaluate spelling assessment information more rigorously to include a detailed analysis of the specific areas of teaching that pupils need from their different starting points.

Our final line of enquiry focused on the impact of the leadership of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- Until recently, leaders did not accurately identify pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, the number of pupils deemed to need additional, specialist support was too high. This is no longer the case.

Accurate identification has ensured that the pupils with most need now receive timely, targeted support to meet their specific needs.

- Leaders insist that all pupils have equality of opportunity. They know that, historically, because of inconsistent identification, teachers did not provide rigorous, academic challenge for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The effective use of special educational needs funding is now diminishing the differences between pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and others. Pupils are supported by skilled teaching assistants and benefit from specialist, high-quality teaching and support.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- younger pupils' reasoning and problem solving skills are developed so they can deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts
- pupils' technical accuracy in spelling is consistently high throughout the school, in line with the national curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Costello
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the executive headteacher and other staff. A meeting was held with the governors, including the chair of the governing body. I listened to pupils read and talked with a group of pupils about their views of school. You accompanied me on short visits to every class in school. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and looked at pupils' books. The school's self-evaluation and improvement plans were scrutinised, along with information about pupils' progress and safeguarding documents. The 36 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including their written comments, were considered. I also took account of the 15 survey responses from staff.