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Mrs Julie Ball  
Executive Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Julie Ball

### **Short inspection of Bomere Heath CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 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 April 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 continued to make sure that all members of staff put pupils' welfare and their personal development at the heart of the school's work. Equally, through a comprehensive programme of training, monitoring and feedback, the quality of teaching is consistently good. As a result, pupils thrive socially, and make good and sometimes rapid progress from their starting points.

Leaders are quick to identify any weaknesses and act swiftly to make improvements. Since the previous inspection, the school has become part of the Bomere and XI Towns Federation. This has allowed leaders to organise joint training programmes, sharing of resources and opportunities for teachers to moderate each other's work and to share best practice. This arrangement is highly beneficial to the school. There has been a three-year upward trend in the proportions of children leaving Reception and entering Year 1 with a good level of development, and those reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

You recognise that outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 showed a drop in standards when compared with previous years. In this smaller than average size primary school, results can vary considerably because of the small numbers

taking the tests. Pupils had previously made year-on-year progress which compared favourably with national figures. Past test results also show that disadvantaged pupils did at least as well as other pupils who were not disadvantaged. However, in 2016, national test results showed that pupils' outcomes in mathematics were below average and in writing had fallen to well below average. In reading, outcomes were above the national average. Overall, disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as others. You have carefully assessed the reasons for this decline in these pupils' achievement last year, and have put in place appropriate and successful strategies to ensure that this does not become a trend.

Pupils spoke to me about how much they enjoyed the wide range of subjects they study at school. They were able to explain how their work has improved as a result of teachers' help and guidance. They are pleased that the school council represents their views and makes a difference to school life, for example by appointing pupil helpers at important school events such as the sports day taking place during my visit.

The leadership team and governors have made progress on the areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection. Results in mathematics have improved. Results are also improving in other subjects. Being part of the Bomere and XI Towns Federation has allowed staff to observe good and better practice in other classrooms. This has enabled them to evaluate more effectively the impact on pupils' learning in their area of responsibility. Pupils are responding well. Staff use carefully targeted interventions and support for pupils who have gaps in their learning, and these are helping them to make good progress. The combined effect of all these actions is that outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are improving for all pupils, irrespective of their starting points. Senior leaders aim to improve standards further, with ambitions for more pupils to be achieving greater depth in the quality of their work.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

There is a strong culture of vigilance in the school. Leaders make sure that they train all members of staff and regularly update them with the latest guidance. Additionally, all members of the governing body have attended safeguarding and safer recruitment training.

There is a very open and supportive ethos in the school. This means that not only do members of staff report even the slightest concern that they may have, but pupils and parents feel confident to approach school leaders to report anything untoward.

Safeguarding leaders always investigate thoroughly all potential safeguarding and welfare issues. They work very closely with parents and a range of external agencies to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Equally, they actively support

families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Leaders make sure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, such as when using the internet. In addition, leaders provide much useful information to parents on the school's website about how they can support their children's safety online.

## **Inspection findings**

- Leaders recognised that pupils' achievement in writing needed to improve. This is a priority following disappointing 2016 results for the end of key stage 2. As a consequence, leaders have rightly put in place a range of strategies to improve the quality of pupils' writing, and work seen in books shows clear evidence of progress over time across all year groups. There is strong evidence of the vast majority of pupils making good progress in writing. However, in a small number of books seen in classrooms, particularly in key stage 1, some pupils' handwriting and presentation of work was poor and untidy.
- Teachers have responded to leaders' high expectations and now routinely focus on improving pupils' use of grammar, punctuation and spelling. You have refined your assessment policy accordingly. Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning skilfully to enable pupils to clarify their ideas and deepen their thinking so that the quality of their writing improves.
- The leadership team expects teachers to use the broad curriculum as a focus for all pupils to read across a range of interesting topics. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use dictionaries and thesauruses to help self-check the meanings of words and sentences or find expressive words to improve their writing. The small number of disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in reading. With well-targeted intervention and support, many pupils have a firm grasp of basic literacy skills. They are confident in talking with a partner to check the meaning of words and phrases in the books or information they read. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 read with understanding, and talk confidently about information they have been researching, for example in their work considering the merits of holidaying in Wales or Thailand.
- You have established a regular routine for monitoring the quality of teaching. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas that need to improve. Leaders rightly use a wide range of information to evaluate teaching, taking into account pupils' progress over time as well as evidence from learning walks and formal observations. You ensure that teachers receive helpful feedback on an individual basis or collectively, as appropriate. For example, you correctly recognise the need to ensure that all staff take into account the learning needs of all pupils in mixed-age classes.
- When you note specific areas for development, you skilfully put in place tailored support. This might take the form of teachers planning jointly with more experienced colleagues, visiting other schools, including in the Federation, and observing good and outstanding practice. Your swift follow-up demonstrates that these professional development opportunities are highly effective, with rapid improvements being made.
- You make sure that teachers have the information and training they need to

accurately assess pupils' progress. You stipulate that teachers complete frequent, regular and thorough reviews of pupils' progress and use this information to inform their planning. As a result, pupils who are falling behind are identified without delay and given the help they need to catch up. You know which interventions work best and spend pupil premium funding wisely to secure effective support for disadvantaged pupils.

- Subject coordinators carry out valuable work, supporting teachers to improve their practice. They develop teachers' modelling of learning so that pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Teachers have increased confidence when teaching the more complex areas of the curriculum, such as mastery aspects in mathematics. As a result, they have greater skill and knowledge to provide pupils with more-challenging activities. Pupils delight in attempting the challenging games and quizzes in mathematics lessons. These improvements in the quality of teaching have led to pupils making better progress in mathematics across the school from their different starting points.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities throughout the school is very small. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), working with the Federation SENCo, ensures that identification of pupils with additional needs is rapid. As a consequence, they receive the best support available from outside agencies and the school's team of teaching assistants.
- Governors visit the school regularly. This year they have focused their visits to check on how well writing is improving. Because of these developments, there has been a marked improvement across key stage 2. Tracking information shows that in all year groups across key stage 2, a good proportion of pupils are reaching the standards expected for their age. Key stage 1 to key stage 2 progress information for the current Year 6 class points to much faster progress than for last year's cohort.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all staff take care to improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work
- further rigorous action is taken to ensure that staff take into account the learning needs of all pupils in mixed-age classes.

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

Yours sincerely

Steven Cartlidge

**Ofsted Inspector**

**Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher and the Federation and school special educational needs co-ordinators. I also met with groups of pupils and four members of the governing body. I scrutinised school documents, including safeguarding checks, information about pupils' achievement and records of checks on the quality of teaching. I visited all classrooms with you to speak with pupils, look at their books, observe their learning and hear several pupils read. I examined child protection information. I took account of the six staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire and 25 parent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also took account of the views of the 19 parents who texted me, and the nine responses to the online pupil questionnaire. I spoke to the local authority representative on the telephone.