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Mr Andrew Davis
Headteacher
Belvidere Primary School
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Dear Mr Davis

Short inspection of Belvidere Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 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 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. Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to staffing. The appointment of a deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, nursery manager and teaching staff has further strengthened leadership and the quality of teaching and learning. All parents who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, said that their children make good progress in the school.

Staff are strong role models for pupils. They help to create a caring community. The school environment is engaging, and there is a balance of displays to support learning and areas to celebrate pupils' achievements. Pupils behave well in the school, both in lessons and at breaktimes. This was confirmed by my conversations with pupils and by the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire. The pupils I saw in lessons during the inspection were keen to participate and confident to talk to me about their learning. Pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work.

You have developed pupils' learning behaviours effectively, including resilience, reliability and responsibility. At the previous inspection, you were asked to develop pupils' independence and allow them to make decisions about their learning. During the inspection, I saw pupils showing initiative, making decisions and working independently. For example, in the early years, pupils were making decisions in their painting activities and choosing to write their name and mark make. In a lively

Year 6 mathematics lesson, after skilful questioning from the teacher, pupils were fully engaged in a problem-solving puzzle. They made choices on how to tackle the problem and reflected on their learning. They were able to apply knowledge and skills effectively and understand links to other contexts. You were also asked to develop leadership roles in the school. During the inspection, I saw the positive impact of your restructured leadership team. You have identified key roles and responsibilities and you have shared responsibility for school improvement more widely through the role of coordinators. As a result, teaching and learning have continued to improve.

You, other leaders and governors have a secure understanding of what is working well and know where further work is needed. Your self-evaluation is honest and accurate. The key lines of enquiry for this inspection and the areas of improvement came as no surprise to you.

Leaders accurately identify where improvements need to be made and swiftly implement the necessary steps to tackle any weaknesses. For example, you are fully aware that further improvements need to be made for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, especially in key stage 1, to ensure that they reach the standards they are capable of achieving. You have identified pupils' reasoning in mathematics as an area of focus across the school. In addition, you quickly identified the reasons for the drop, to below the national average, in the Year 1 phonics result in 2016 and in the proportion of children who attained a good level of development at the end of Reception in 2016.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. Staff vetting and checking systems are rigorous. Nearly all parents who responded to Parent View agree that pupils are happy, safe and well cared for by the staff. Staff attend regular training to ensure that safeguarding remains at the forefront of everyone's minds. When staff bring issues to your attention, you make informed and appropriate decisions about the next steps. Should you have concerns, you and other staff work closely with the local authority and outside agencies, when necessary, to ensure that children's needs are assessed and met and that they are kept safe.

All pupils who spoke to me told me that they feel safe in school. Pupils understand what constitutes bullying and said that it is rare. They are confident that they can share any concerns or worries they may have with a member of staff, and that the issue will be swiftly sorted out. They commented that their school is a happy place where they are well looked after. A pupil commented, 'The school is fabulous! Everyone is so caring. We are like a massive family — like brothers and sisters.' Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including how to deal with the risks they may face in the use of the internet and mobile phones.

Inspection findings

- Senior leaders, through accurate evaluation, know precisely which areas need to

improve. In particular, you know that, although you have quickly put actions in place, there is more work to be done to ensure that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make stronger progress. In the recent Year 6 assessments, there was a marked improvement in the proportions of pupils who have attained at a greater depth in reading, mathematics and English grammar, and punctuation and spelling. These proportions are above those found nationally in 2016. However, you are aware that in some classes, and especially in key stage 1, the tasks set for pupils are not always challenging and pupils are not moved on in their learning quickly enough. You have also identified that pupils need to develop a cursive handwriting and apply their knowledge of punctuation in writing if they are to achieve the highest standard.

- The leadership team quickly addressed the dip in phonics in Year 1 in 2016. You have reviewed the teaching of phonics, and staff have been trained in the delivery of a whole-school approach. This is having a very positive impact on achievement in phonics. The proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in the recent phonics check in Year 1 was a marked improvement on last year's proportion and well above the 2016 national average. Phonics is now taught well from the outset. Children begin learning their sounds and letters in the early years and Year 1. During my visit, pupils of different abilities demonstrated good levels of understanding of how to break down and blend tricky words.
- Children join the early years with skills and knowledge which vary but are generally just below typical for their age. In 2016, there was a dip in the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development in the early years. The results were below the national average and especially so for boys. Leaders took immediate action. The early years team members have undertaken training with the local teaching school and developed outdoor provision, by constructing a new shelter and improving provision and resources. The addition of the school Nursery, which now accepts two-year olds, is leading to children making accelerated progress, because children have a longer time to develop their early skills.
- As a result of leaders' actions, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in the current Reception class was in line with the 2016 national average for both girls and boys. This is a marked improvement on the previous year. However, you are aware that boys' writing lags behind and have identified this as a key focus area in the early years.
- Your self-evaluation rightly identifies that, in the past, pupils' progress in mathematics has not matched that seen in writing and reading. Leaders have provided excellent training and support for staff members. This has strengthened their subject knowledge. Your current assessments and work in pupils' books show that pupils are making good progress, building well on their prior attainment and have a secure grasp of arithmetic and calculation methods. Leaders plan to provide further training and support to make sure that teaching develops pupils' reasoning skills to explain how they reach their answers.
- Governors have a good overview of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They visit the school to gain further information and challenge

leaders to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of the children.

- Pupils behave well and are polite and respectful. They enjoy school, and this is shown in their above-average attendance. Pupils were keen to tell me about the 6Rs – reflect, resilience, rejoice, reliable, responsible and respectful. Pupils explained that these are the key values they try to show in school and their daily lives.
- Pupils enjoy the broad curriculum, which is enriched through trips and clubs that broaden pupils' horizons. During the inspection, Year 5 was on a trip to Carding Mill Valley. Pupils in Year 6 were very excited about the residential trip to an outdoor centre in Devon, due to take place at the end of the week. The culture for sports and music is strong. Pupils discussed with great enthusiasm the concert which they performed for parents the day before the inspection. Pupils play a range of instruments, including drums, violin, guitar, folk whistle and the recorder.
- Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures and those who have different religious beliefs. They know what British values are and can talk confidently about how democracy operates and how it is applied in their own school to elect school council members. Pupils are kind and considerate and are proud to take on additional responsibilities, such as those of head boy and girl, prefects, house captains and 'callers' who line pupils up at the end of lunchtime.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that teaching:

- continues to promote the development of reasoning skills in mathematics
- challenges the most able pupils, especially in key stage 1, to enable them to reach their potential
- raises the achievement of boys in writing in the early years
- develops handwriting skills and promotes the application of the higher levels of punctuation, so that pupils can improve the overall quality of their writing further.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Somers
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and your deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, who also have responsibility for mathematics, English and early years. We talked about the improvements that have been made since the last inspection. Together, we visited lessons and looked at some workbooks. I also held discussions with the vice chair of governors and talked to pupils. I had a conversation with an officer from the local authority. A wide range of documents were looked at, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and information relating to pupils' current achievement and progress. I also checked the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements and attendance information. I took into account the 49 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.