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Fiona Cowan
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Dear Miss Cowan

Short inspection of Bolsover Infant 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 January 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Leaders and governors are aspirational for pupils and committed to the continued improvement of the school. You and your leadership team have not been complacent and you have worked well together to build on the good practice identified in the last inspection report. You have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Parents made it very clear to me that they hold the school and its staff in very high regard as a result of the support you provide for their children. Many of the parents I spoke with, and who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, commented on the regular communications they receive from you and how approachable you and your staff are. Many were particularly impressed with the support given to children who have additional needs.

You have maintained the significant strengths noted at the last inspection, particularly in terms of pupils' behaviour, and are right to be proud of the high standards which many of your pupils achieve in their assessments at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils are happy and confident. They feel safe and supported in the school. The

pupils I talked with were keen to tell me that they enjoy their lessons and they speak confidently about how the school is helping them to keep safe now and in the future, including when using the internet. Parents also commented on your work in this aspect of their children's safety.

Leaders have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. The standards achieved by children at the end of the foundation stage and key stage 1, which are frequently above national averages, are testament to the good quality of teaching now seen throughout the school. Leaders have reviewed the topics children are taught and a number of opportunities have been developed to begin extending the children's cultural and multicultural knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Year 2 now study India as a topic. They have enjoyed tasting Indian food and have had fun trying on bindis. Children are taken to visit a range of local churches, including the famous Chesterfield landmark, the crooked spire, which is helping them develop pride in their cultural heritage. They also visit a mosque each year so that they can learn about cultures other than their own.

You have made improvements this year in the number of children in Year 1 who achieve the expected standard in phonics thanks to focused small-group teaching and have acted quickly to put in place support for those children who were unsuccessful in achieving the standard. The interventions you provided last year for children in Year 2 have enabled a significant majority of those who failed to achieve the standard in 2016 to be successful when retested this year.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You complete an annual safeguarding audit to check that safeguarding arrangements continue to be robust and you implement an action plan for any recommended improvements to ensure that your practice remains up to date and meets all new guidelines. All statutory checks on staff are carried out and recorded carefully and accurately.

All staff receive regular and appropriate training which is systematically updated. They have a good understanding of their responsibilities in ensuring children's safety and well-being. Your staff are clear about the signs of abuse they should look out for in children and know what action to take if they have any concerns. The files you showed me indicate that staff take prompt and effective action to report any concerns and secure the help and support children and their families need. Leaders are tireless in seeking external support when needed. Leaders, governors and staff undertake regular training relevant to child protection and safeguarding issues, such as the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. You have provided opportunities for them to learn about issues such as e-safety. Visitors, such as the fire service, come to the school to remind pupils how to stay safe in their homes and the local community. Pupils say that bullying is rare and, if it does happen, they know staff will deal with it quickly.

Inspection findings

- Since the last inspection, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has increased. Standards for disadvantaged pupils have also improved and their attainment is now close to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has increased and is now closer to the national average for 2016. Children in Year 2 in 2017 who did not achieve the expected standard in Year 1 have been well supported and outcomes are in line with the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Year 1 are achieving better in their phonics screening test and the school has quickly put in place small-group support to ensure that the standard is achieved when they take the test again at the end of Year 2.
- Effective teaching has ensured that pupils achieve high standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. Outcomes are often better than the national average. A greater proportion of pupils achieve the higher standards than is seen nationally.
- Pupil attendance at the school was higher than the national average in 2016. The proportion of children who have attendance rates lower than 90%, and are therefore persistently absent, has increased during this school year. This includes persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have deployed staff to work with families who need help to improve their children's attendance and have successfully reduced this to a smaller number of families. The school has identified the need to challenge families about their children's absences earlier in the school year and provide support for families sooner.
- You have completed a review of the curriculum to identify how lessons can be used to develop the children's awareness of the world beyond their local community. Despite some resistance to visiting non-Christian places of worship, the school has recognised the need to persist with this aspect of the children's development and have plans to further extend learning in this area. Children will benefit from the additional plans school leaders have to extend the children's awareness of cultures beyond their own.
- Additional means of communicating with parents have been introduced and parents speak very highly of the school's commitment, which enables them to be partners in their children's learning.
- The school has been very successful in supporting children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially those who have emotional needs. Parents who have children with additional needs were very complimentary about the help their children receive.
- 'Learning Heroes', such as 'Mr Stick' who encourages 'stickability', which you have introduced to help children develop good learning behaviours, have been effective in improving the children's perseverance and concentration in lessons.

- Developing pupils' handwriting is a priority and you have successfully secured funding for this initiative.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the variation in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally in Year 1 phonics is removed
- persistent absenteeism of disadvantaged pupils is reduced.

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

Jane Green
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and we agreed the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. I also met with senior leaders and representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors and the school's pastoral staff. I spoke with a representative from the local authority. I spoke with parents before school and met with a group of pupils in Year 2 to talk about their school experience. You and I visited classes and witnessed small-group work to review the teaching of phonics across three year groups. In addition, I scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and records. I looked at current information in relation to pupils' attendance and the procedures in place to improve this. I also reviewed the school's own evaluation of its work and improvement plans. Together we looked at work in classrooms and on displays around school linked to spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning. I took account of the 26 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 14 responses from parents to the Ofsted free-text service. I also took account of the 23 responses to Ofsted's staff surveys.