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Miss Faye Bertham
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Bertham

Short inspection of Stanbridge Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 November 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 November 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 provide strong leadership for the school. You have systematically improved each area of the school's work over the last five years. You provide training and encouragement for staff to develop their skills, using a local network of schools very effectively. Consequently, the school is now a vibrant community with committed and well-motivated staff. Middle leaders and senior leaders form strong, cohesive teams which are focused on continually improving teaching and learning. You have high expectations of teachers, and you underpin this with support and enthusiasm. Many teachers and pupils comment that the school is a positive place to work and learn because you lead by example.

You ensure that pupils are given many opportunities to take on responsibility. Pupils respond with great eagerness, and this makes a real difference to school life. Children settle quickly and learn well in the early years. The proportion of children who attain a good level of development is consistently above the national average. In key stage 1, teaching is effective and pupils are given the support they need to succeed. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average. Teachers ensure that pupils are given a wide variety of curriculum experiences in key stage 2. For example, teaching about digital technologies is particularly strong, and this leads to pupils producing short films for 'Stanbridge TV'. Pupils' progress in reading and writing is around the national average. However, pupils' progress in mathematics

dipped last year and was below average.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to increase the level of challenge for the most able pupils. You have done this. The most able pupils now have access to a wide range of challenging activities within the curriculum and through lunchtime and after-school clubs. Visiting experts regularly provide 'masterclasses' in art, photography, cookery and other creative subjects. The proportion of pupils going beyond the expected standards in key stages 1 and 2 is greater than that seen nationally.

Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been strong historically. However, last year the proportion of pupils reaching the required level of skill was below previous results. You have improved phonics teaching, with some success, but you acknowledge that further work is necessary. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is one of your targets for improvement. Although these pupils' progress is broadly average, you are ambitious to see them make greater progress and so attain higher outcomes by the end of Year 6. The rate of attendance for some groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, has been below average in the recent past. You have taken action to address this and, as a result, pupils' attendance has improved. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. The vast majority of parents would recommend it to others.

Safeguarding is effective.

Along with governors, you give safeguarding a high profile and ensure that policy and practice in the school are in line with statutory requirements. You ensure that thorough vetting procedures are followed for all adults that work in the school. These procedures are regularly checked by governors. Staff are confident about what actions to take if they have any concerns about a child's safety or well-being because you use your expertise well to provide effective training.

You work effectively with other agencies, making timely referrals when the need arises. You are tenacious in following up these referrals if you are not satisfied with the response you receive. Records of these referrals, and subsequent actions, are high quality.

Your curriculum helps pupils understand and appreciate potential risks to their safety, including online risks. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Pupils report that there is very little bullying or name-calling at school. They are adamant that the school is a welcoming place for pupils from all backgrounds. A very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe that the school keeps pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- The chair of the governing body was appointed in September 2017. She demonstrates a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Although the membership of the governing body has changed completely over the last five years, the expertise in each role has been passed on securely.

Consequently, the governing body has maintained the skills required to provide effective challenge and support to senior leaders.

- To decide if the school remained good, one of the lines of enquiry focused on key stage 2 pupils' progress in mathematics. In 2016 and 2017, pupils made less progress in mathematics than seen nationally. Senior leaders identified pupils' lack of agility in processing mental calculations as one of the stumbling blocks. Senior leaders have introduced new approaches to teaching mathematics including more opportunity for pupils to practise these skills. As a result, the progress of pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 is stronger than in previous years. The school's assessment information and work in pupils' books indicates that more pupils are on track to attain the expected standard in mathematics by the end of Year 6. Some pupils, particularly the least able pupils, do not yet have a secure understanding of key mathematical words, and so their ability to explain their reasoning is limited.
- Another line of enquiry evaluated senior leaders' actions to help disadvantaged pupils make better progress. Senior leaders have recently changed the emphasis of their work to support disadvantaged pupils. Extra funding for these pupils is now targeted more effectively on their individual needs. Among other strategies, the school employs two teaching assistants as 'pupil premium champions'. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils' progress in Year 6 from their starting points was average. Senior leaders recognise, though, that to overcome previous underachievement, many of these pupils need to make stronger progress. Work in pupils' books shows that senior leaders' actions are beginning to take effect. Links with parents are generally well established. However, there is scope for better communication with some parents so they can better understand pupils' work and support them at home.
- A third line of enquiry considered pupils' progress in establishing their early reading skills. In 2015 and 2016, a higher proportion of Year 1 pupils attained the expected standard in phonics than seen nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard fell last year. However, some pupils, given their weaker starting points, did make strong progress toward the standard without attaining it. Senior leaders have provided training for teachers and teaching assistants to develop their skills in this area. In particular, teaching assistants have grown in confidence to work effectively with groups of pupils rather than individuals. Teachers are assessing pupils' phonic knowledge more frequently, and so individual gaps in their skills are being dealt with earlier than previously. However, senior leaders have high aspirations for all pupils. They accept that further improvement in phonics teaching is necessary to make sure that pupils' attainment is consistently above average.
- A final line of enquiry looked at attendance. The rate of pupils' attendance was below average in 2016, and even though attendance rose to the national average in 2017, some groups of pupils still did not attend regularly enough. Senior leaders have emphasised the importance of regular attendance by providing strong messages to parents and by providing more rewards for pupils who attend well, for example through regular class competitions. Staff work closely with individuals who find it difficult to maintain good attendance. Consequently, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has fallen. For

current pupils, the rate of attendance has risen further and is now above average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the mathematical vocabulary of the least able pupils in key stage 2 is improved
- links with parents are further developed to reinforce pupils' learning at home
- phonics teaching challenges Year 1 pupils to make rapid progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held formal meetings with you, senior leaders, the chair of the governing body and five other governors. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I spoke with many pupils informally at playtime and lunchtime. I held a meeting with pupils from the school council. I looked at examples of pupils' work, made observations of learning across the school and spoke with pupils during lessons. I scrutinised a variety of documents, including assessment information, records of the checks that leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children and the school's own evaluation of its performance. I took account of 78 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, 31 responses to the staff questionnaire, 143 responses to the pupil questionnaire and one note from a parent.