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12 February 2018

Mr Laurie Munro
Principal
Begbrook Primary Academy
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Dear Mr Munro

Short inspection of Begbrook Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 23 January 2018 with Matthew Cottrell, Ofsted Inspector, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Despite recent changes to the leadership of the school, Begbrook Primary continues to be a good school. Those responsible for governance, including the trust, ensure that there remains a sharp focus on improving outcomes for all pupils. You appreciate the collaborative work offered by the trust to support the improvements being made.

You, together with the vice-principal, started at the school in September 2017. You are ambitious for pupils and committed to developing excellence in the education provided. You aim for pupils to leave the school fully and solidly prepared for the next stages of their education. You have worked effectively to develop a thorough and accurate analysis of the school's strengths and next steps. You are fully aware of how well different groups of pupils throughout the school are achieving. Achievement overall is good across the school. However, you are not complacent. You are aware that some groups of pupils, for example boys and pupils who are disadvantaged, could achieve more, particularly in reading and writing.

Pupils enjoy school; attendance is above the national average and continues to improve. The majority of parents and carers are very pleased with the continuing good-quality education. Some would like more information to be provided, particularly so that they know more about the progress their children are making. In an attempt to improve this, leaders have already started extra parent consultations

and work to improve the school's website.

In approaching key areas for improvement, you recognise the strong and emerging leaders who work across the school. Much work has taken place since the previous inspection to ensure that leaders have a clear role in ensuring that the school continues to improve. Together, you are forming a cohesive, forward-thinking team that is determined to ensure that every pupil can 'believe, achieve and succeed'.

Your work to improve outcomes for specific groups of pupils is informed by educational research into teaching strategies that have been shown to work in other schools. You combine this with your own research into pupils' individual needs. For example, following trials in a small number of classes in the autumn term, you have introduced some new resources and strategies to teach reading across the school. Teachers have a clear and consistent understanding of how to develop pupils' comprehension. An agreed system of 'retrieve, interpret, choice' used in each reading lesson is helping to develop pupils' understanding of what they are reading. You are also ensuring that pupils enjoy what they read. Pupils develop their appreciation of books through shared class discussion and an investment in class sets of high-quality books. As this work is new, you know that analysis of its impact on pupils' progress will be needed to ensure that achievement continues to improve.

Staff feel included and supported as improvements continue to be made. The high morale of staff described in the previous inspection report remains as high now. You and your leadership team are committed to providing detailed, precise feedback to staff as you visit lessons, look at pupils' books and analyse pupils' progress. As a result, teachers are developing a clear idea of how to make adaptations to their teaching. Your aim is that pupils can succeed, no matter what challenges they may face.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Well-understood systems and a thorough approach ensure that safeguarding is effective and that pupils are safe. Staff receive the necessary training to notice any signs of concern about pupils' well-being. The trust provides online testing to ensure that staff understand the implications from training on their work in school. Recent training has helped to ensure that staff are clear about reporting minor concerns. This all helps to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

The academy council members have good experience and understanding of safeguarding practices and they also play their part in holding leaders to account for the effectiveness of safeguarding across the school. Any complaints are investigated thoroughly and lessons are learned as a result.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we agreed some particular areas to explore in more detail. The first was to look at the work that leaders are doing to improve progress and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have taken a measured approach to ensuring that additional funding is used to pinpoint precise support for disadvantaged pupils. This very recent, exemplary work provides detailed analysis of the particular needs and vulnerabilities of this group of pupils which has led you to provide specialised support. For example, the addition of a counsellor and additional activities to support play for pupils who have emotional needs have led to improved behaviour, especially around lunchtimes.
- Your recent work to improve teaching strategies to support disadvantaged pupils is starting to improve pupils' outcomes. For example, pupils' communication skills are improving following work to help pupils to 'think like a learner'.
- Staff have been working to improve pupils' communication skills through a focus on developing oracy. Teachers consistently expect pupils to answer questions in full sentences rather than one-word answers. This supports pupils to think carefully about their use of language.
- Parents have noticed this focus on good learning attitudes and habits. Parents of children in the Reception classes were pleased that their children are expected to talk to each other and try to sort problems out before asking a teacher. Older pupils are increasingly able to discuss their learning and therefore identify what they need to develop next. A typical comment was, 'I know that I must work hard and not give up if I want to do well.'
- Second, we focused on how well subject leaders are helping to improve outcomes for pupils across the school. Subject leaders provide a thorough and well-planned approach to improving outcomes in their subject areas. For example, there has been a new approach to teaching mathematics which ensures that pupils are encouraged to use their mathematical skills to solve problems. Pupils' books show that work is suitably challenging.
- Meetings of staff in each year group identify particular pupils or groups of pupils who need additional support. Leaders then check that this support is in place and that it is helping pupils to understand the specific areas they may have missed, or not completely understood. This is starting to help pupils to catch up.
- Finally, we explored how you are ensuring that the progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is improving. You have made changes to the organisation of teams of staff as you want to ensure that those who support pupils work more closely together. The special educational needs coordinator now leads an inclusion team that works to ensure that support is effective. This work is new and you are aware that it is too soon to see the impact this has on pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- parents receive good information about the progress that their children are making
- the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged continues to improve and matches or exceeds that seen nationally.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the academy council, the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for the City of Bristol. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tonwen Empson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors held several meetings with senior leaders to discuss the school's evaluation of its effectiveness and the improvement plan and to explore information about the progress pupils make. Together with senior leaders, inspectors visited learning in lessons and looked at pupils' workbooks.

Meetings took place with members of the academy council and with several members of the multi-academy trust, the Cabot Learning Federation, including the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer.

School documents were scrutinised, including documents relating to safeguarding and attendance. Meetings were held with members of staff, including year group leaders, the leaders for mathematics and English and the special educational needs coordinator.

Inspectors spoke informally with pupils during the day and gathered parents' views at the start of the day. The 56 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered along with a letter received from a parent. Inspectors took account of the 45 responses to the staff survey.