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Mr A Cairns
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Cairns

Short inspection of Belle Vue Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 February 2018, 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 September 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 your appointment in 2016, you have created a forward-thinking, ambitious culture within the school. You have been uncompromising in your belief that pupils and staff deserve the very best that Belle Vue Primary School can offer. You are deeply proud of the school and the position that it holds within the community. As a consequence, you have earned the respect of staff, parents and pupils.

The governing body is experienced and dedicated. Governors offer well informed and effective challenge to both you and your leadership team. This is because they have undertaken a broad range of training to develop their skills. You have a strong team of leaders who work hard to ensure that the school continues to improve. Leaders know the school well and share your vision for pupils. This is encapsulated in your school's aim to 'develop the skills that ensure a lifelong love of learning'.

There is a welcoming and happy atmosphere in your school. This is because staff feel valued. During the inspection, members of staff that I spoke to were keen to tell me that you always have time to talk to them and to listen. Members of staff greatly appreciate the opportunities that you provide for them to undertake professional development. They use such opportunities in an effective manner to offer a curriculum for pupils which is broad, balanced and exciting.

In the previous inspection, the report highlighted the strength of pupils' behaviour, noting how considerate and polite they were. My observations in school confirm that

such strengths have been maintained. Inspectors also highlighted some areas for further development. First, that leaders should ensure that activities are carefully planned to match pupils' different learning needs. You have worked hard to address this issue. An assessment and tracking system has been introduced to ensure that work is challenging for pupils. Leaders and teachers undertake regular meetings to discuss the progress of all groups of pupils. As a consequence, all teachers are able to plan effectively and ensure that additional activities are put in to place to support the needs of any pupils not on track to meet their targets.

The previous inspectors also noted that pupils' speaking skills required further development. This has been addressed most successfully. Your pupils are articulate and confident speakers. This is because teachers ensure that curricular activities provide pupils with a broad range of opportunities to develop their speaking skills. This includes activities such as partnership work in class, school council meetings and visiting older members of the community to sing and talk with them. Most recently, pupils from Year 6 performed a play by William Shakespeare at a local theatre.

Finally, inspectors in 2012 noted that early reading skills required further development. This was to be undertaken by teaching pupils a wider range of reading strategies. Much progress has been made in this area. You have created a literacy-rich environment throughout school which promotes and celebrates reading. You ensure that all teachers follow a consistent approach when teaching phonics. A wide selection of books have been purchased to enable parents to support their children's learning at home. As a result, children's performance in reading at a good level of development at the end of the Reception class has increased considerably. It is now above that seen nationally. Similarly, pupils' achievement in the phonics screening test at the end of Year 1 has increased year by year to a level which, in 2017, was above the national average.

We discussed areas where further work is required to support school improvement. Although much progress has been made in the teaching of reading in the early years and Year 1, we agreed that further work is now required to ensure that the most able pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 are further challenged to ensure that a larger proportion reach the higher levels in their learning. Additionally, we agreed that the new system for teaching mathematics should be shared across all classes to ensure a more consistent approach to teaching. This will support pupils in reaching the expected and the higher levels by the end of key stage 2.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are of a high standard. Your school site is safe and secure and visitors are carefully checked on entry. You provide visitors with leaflets on safeguarding and fire safety procedures.

Staff and governors undertake a broad range of safeguarding training. This ensures that they understand their role in keeping pupils safe. Almost all parents who responded to Parent view, Ofsted's online survey, said that they felt their children were safe and well looked after at school.

Your family liaison officer works effectively with pupils and their families. Her links with the special educational needs leader and the inclusion team ensure that pupils receive focused support and guidance in areas such as attendance and managing behaviour and emotions.

Inspection findings

- I shared with you some lines of enquiry for the inspection. The first considered how funding has been used to support the attendance and performance of disadvantaged pupils. You have put clear systems in place to track the attendance of this group of pupils. You run a breakfast club to encourage them to arrive at school earlier. Additionally, parents are given information on what good attendance looks like. Pupils particularly enjoy the fact that their good attendance is celebrated and rewarded in school through the use of certificates. As a consequence, attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils have increased, most notably for the group who attend your breakfast club.
- You use pupil premium funding in an effective manner to support the performance of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders track their progress closely to highlight any barriers to learning. Additional support is provided to ensure that disadvantaged pupils meet their targets. You ensure that this additional support is effective by measuring pupils' performance at the beginning and end of each support programme. The resultant data shows that funding is being used effectively and that disadvantaged pupils are making good progress to reach the expected levels for their age.
- The next area we looked at was how effectively reading is being taught throughout school to ensure consistently high achievement for pupils. Leaders are working exceptionally hard in this area, creating a reading environment across school which is highly engaging and stimulating. Your initiative to promote reading for pleasure has had significant results. Your school council, working together with leaders and governors, has created a school library of the highest standard. You allowed pupils to visit a local bookshop to purchase books and to decide upon the development of each section of the library. Pupils I spoke to were exceptionally proud of their new library, making comments such as, 'It feels magical', 'It is so warm and calm and quiet' and 'There are signposts to other magical worlds.' As a consequence, leaders note that pupils' love of reading has been greatly enhanced.
- Reading remains a focus within classrooms. All classes engage in story-time and authors and books are studied in each class. Pupils' progress in reading is closely tracked by teachers and additional support provided where necessary. Leaders who monitor the teaching of reading highlight the strong use of questioning by teachers to further develop pupils' skills. As a consequence, your school's most recent data shows that the lower- and middle-ability pupils in all classes are making the progress that leaders expect. However, the same degree of progress is not in evidence at the higher levels. We agreed that further work is required in this area to ensure that the most able pupils are suitably challenged to ensure that their progress matches that of other groups.
- My final line of enquiry concerned the level of challenge in mathematics which is

being offered to all pupils, including the most able, at key stage 2. Your own assessment and tracking information has highlighted inconsistency and you are beginning to address it in an effective manner. Additional resources for the teaching of mathematics have been provided to pupils and staff are receiving training to develop further their skills in the teaching of this subject. Display is used effectively in all classrooms to support pupils' understanding of mathematics.

- Leaders are aware that there has been a lack of depth to the teaching of mathematics in school. As a consequence, a new system of teaching, which focuses upon reasoning and problem-solving, is currently being introduced. Early results have been exceptionally positive, with pupils demonstrating an increasing capacity to discuss their learning and apply it effectively. We agreed that further work is required in this area to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics which ensures greater levels of challenge, most notably for the most able pupils.
- You have rightly focused on the need to broaden and deepen pupils' learning. Your work to develop an exciting, engaging and meaningful curriculum has been very effective. The teachers I spoke to during the inspection were excited by the opportunities to develop their teaching skills and to provide meaningful activities to pupils. They particularly enjoy the cross-curricular approach to teaching. For example, pupils in Year 4 were able to visit a local factory to study robots in industry. This followed a detailed study in school of mechanics via science, design and technology, literacy and information technology. The school has received national awards and this is further testament to the broad and balanced curriculum that you passionately believe each and every one of your pupils is entitled to.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils are consistently challenged to ensure that rates of achievement at the higher levels are further developed in reading at key stage 1 and 2
- the number of pupils achieving at the expected and the higher levels in mathematics is further developed in key stage 2 by fully embedding the new system of teaching in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Gill Pritchard
Her Majesty's Inspector
Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the two deputy headteachers. I also met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with the leaders for English, mathematics and early years. I also met with your school's local authority general advisor. I had a formal discussion with a group of 10 pupils and met with your business manager. I also met with members of staff to discuss safeguarding, curriculum and professional development.

Accompanied by you, I visited almost all year groups in the school, where I observed pupils' learning. I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and as they moved around the school. I scrutinised examples of pupils' work and reviewed documents, including your record of checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children, the school's self-evaluation, improvement plan and assessment information. I also took account of the 52 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 43 responses from the pupil survey and 34 responses from the staff survey. I considered information posted on the school's website.