

22 May 2018

Daniel Brearey
Headteacher
Brampton Abbots CofE Primary School
Brampton Road
Ross-on-Wye
Herefordshire
HR9 7FX

Dear Mr Brearey

Short inspection of Brampton Abbots CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

You have communicated a clear vision for improvement. Staff understand the school's priorities and the means by which to realise its aims. You have changed the culture of the school so that leaders and teachers now have high expectations of all pupils. Everyone understands their role in enabling 'every child to reach their individual potential'.

Pupils are happy in school and make strong progress over time, across the curriculum. This reflects the school's vision statement that 'happiness is created by achievement and achievement is created by happiness'. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. All of the parents who participated in the online survey said that they would recommend the school to other parents. One parent said: 'What never fails to impress me is the standards of work the children produce and the genuine care staff demonstrate – it shone through from the moment I looked at the school.'

Pupils have a secure understanding of the Brampton Abbots four core values: friendship, respect, honesty and happiness. They can explain why each of these is important in life. These values are the school's house names. The house system engenders the family ethos of the school, where older pupils take responsibility for the well-being of their younger peers. Pupils appreciate the many responsibilities they are given and they are proud to serve the school community. Some pupils are

house captains whose responsibilities include ensuring that their house lines up in an orderly way at the end of breaktimes. I was impressed with the role of the school ambassadors and with how the pupils are so welcoming and friendly to visitors. They rightly have great pride in their school. A notable feature of the culture of the school is the way pupils support each other and genuinely celebrate the success of others.

The school has a strong Christian ethos, underpinned by Christian values. Leaders ensure that these values are promoted in daily worship and in classrooms. Pupils are able to discuss their feelings and behaviour in relation to those values. As a result, pupils thrive in a safe environment that supports them well, both academically and pastorally.

The governing body is committed to ensuring that the school is the best it can be. It is aware of the current priorities and of the actions that are being taken to address these areas of development. Governors are well informed because they receive detailed information from the headteacher. They use external information to verify what they are told by leaders and to provide challenge. Governors understand that even more needs to be done to encourage good attendance across the school.

You have an outward-looking attitude to improvement and work effectively with partnership schools to bring new ideas and approaches into the school. This has enabled you to address the areas for development raised in the last inspection report. You were asked to raise standards in English and develop pupils' speaking. You have done this by changing the overall approach to writing, which has led to consistently high levels of achievement in reading and most particularly, writing. You were also asked to provide greater opportunities for pupils to develop problem-solving skills. Using a mastery approach in mathematics, which focuses on the use of language and explanation, pupils are developing strong skills in reasoning.

Since the last inspection, you have invested heavily in the professional development of staff and have grown the school's leadership capacity as a consequence. The quality of leadership and management, across the school, is a strength.

Although teaching is good, not all teachers are adept at using questioning to encourage pupils to think more deeply.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pre-employment checks on adults at the school are rigorous and well documented. All the staff who work with children are well trained and understand the risks pupils might face. They are vigilant and know what to do if they have concerns about a child. Records of concerns are meticulous and a chronology of concerns is maintained, so that emerging patterns can be quickly identified. There

is a strong culture of safeguarding and pupils' welfare is at the heart of the school.

Pupils told me that they were confident they could share any worries they might have with an adult and they know they would receive help and support. You have ensured that pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when they are using the internet. Consequently, pupils say that they feel safe in school and well looked after.

Inspection findings

- You hold regular pupil progress meetings with staff to discuss individual pupils and the progress they are making in reading, writing and mathematics. You identify possible barriers to learning and overcome these by swiftly providing additional help and support. As a result, any pupil who falls behind catches up quickly. You conduct age-standardised tests in reading and mathematics to check that pupils are working at age-appropriate levels. You make effective use of an online tool, which enables teachers to moderate pupils' writing with other schools nationally. This ensures that the assessment judgements are accurate.
- The quality of writing across the school is consistently excellent. This is because the sequence of lessons is planned strategically so that learning builds on previous learning. The school's approach to writing places great significance on talking. Pupils are confident with the writing process. They develop skills in grammar, punctuation and sentence construction which are utilised in an extended piece of writing. A particular strength in the teaching of writing across the school is the emphasis placed on pupils to think like an author. They review and upgrade the quality of their writing by making very deliberate decisions about powerful vocabulary choices and careful sentence construction. They can justify their choices, explaining the desired impact on the reader.
- Changes in the teaching of phonics have resulted in a steady improvement over time in the performance of Year 1 pupils in the national phonics screening check. In 2017, the percentage of pupils achieving the standard was broadly in line with national averages. This rightly continues to be a focus for the school so that performance can continue to rise year upon year.
- In some classes, teachers skilfully use open-ended questioning to challenge pupils' thinking. For example, one teacher asked the pupils, 'How do I know this is a poem?' The pupils responded, identifying many features of poetry. This form of questioning is not used consistently across the school and in other classes, opportunities to use higher order questioning to challenge and deepen pupils' understanding are missed.
- You were right to be concerned about the level of attendance and persistent absence in the school. You have worked hard to address this by putting clear procedures in place to improve attendance, including using an education welfare officer to support the school's efforts. You have analysed attendance data to establish the rates of attendance for groups of pupils within the school. The small numbers of pupils involved means that a few pupils can make a large difference to the figures. You have identified the pupils with the lowest rates of attendance and have been vigilant in challenging poor attendance. However,

there are still some families who remain hard to convince that frequent attendance is essential.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to embed improvements in the teaching of phonics so that outcomes for pupils are sustained and strengthened
- the quality of questioning is raised so that pupils are challenged more frequently to think deeply and extend their learning
- leaders continue to seek ways of working with parents who are not ensuring that their children's attendance is as good as it can be.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Davies
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other members of school staff and members of the governing body. I also spoke on the telephone to the school's external consultant. Together, you and I planned the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. We jointly visited classes in the school to observe pupils' learning, speak with them and look in their books. I looked at an extensive range of current books from each year group. I also spoke with pupils at breaktime and during the day. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I took into account the views of 14 parents who responded to the online survey. I looked at a range of documentation, including information about safeguarding, attendance and behaviour. I scrutinised and discussed the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement.