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Mr Matt Dunscombe
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Dunscombe

Short inspection of Barford 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Your promotion to headteacher from within the school since that inspection has enabled you to quickly implement robust procedures to improve teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' outcomes. You and your governors have managed a number of changes in leaders and teachers well, while overseeing the recent building of the new classrooms. School improvement has been maintained during this turbulent time.

You, leaders and governors know the school well and are accurate in your evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. You are developing leaders effectively, so that they are becoming more accountable for the impact of their actions in improving teaching and learning and the progress pupils make. You are an excellent role model for staff and pupils. Your high aspirations for this small village school are shared by everyone.

Pupils, staff and governors are proud to be part of Barford Primary School, with its caring, welcoming ethos. Dedicated staff feel well supported and value the professional training they receive to improve their skills. Pupils told me that they work hard at school and enjoy learning. I observed respectful and supportive relationships between pupils and adults within the school.

The effective provision and stimulating activities in the early years ensure that children become confident learners. As a result, they make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1. We observed children developing their imagination, speech and language skills, and recall of traditional stories when standing in a 'storyland' room. To their delight, they saw a bed, a pair of spectacles, a red cape and a 'Wanted' poster for a wolf. The children enthusiastically discussed who could live there and explain the thinking behind their ideas.

Evidence from the school's assessment system, work on display and in pupils' books indicate that all groups of pupils make good progress throughout the school due to effective teaching. Differences in achievement and progress between the few disadvantaged pupils throughout the school and others have diminished. The progress that pupils make from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is above average.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children are happy and feel safe in school. They would recommend the school to others. Parents, staff and governors praise your dedicated leadership and value the approachability of you and your staff. Parents typically stated, 'Barford Primary School is a fantastic school.' Other parents recorded, 'The sense of community within the school, the way the older children look out for the younger ones is brilliant,' and, 'The children are excellently cared for, taught and nurtured in this school.'

The school provides a stimulating curriculum. I observed high-quality physical education activities, including 'garden yoga', and art lessons which develop pupils' skills progressively throughout the school. For example, Reception children showed good observational skills when painting fairy tale characters while mixing primary colours to make different shades. Later during the inspection, I observed Year 5 and Year 6 pupils producing quality artwork of the locality, applying techniques used by the artist Vincent van Gogh.

Pupils have many opportunities to apply their writing skills across the curriculum in order to enhance their learning, which was an area to address following the previous inspection. They feel a sense of achievement when their writing is displayed on the 'What great writing looks like' board. You and your staff have been developing the curriculum to enhance pupils' learning to meet the needs of your pupils. You are now looking to enhance pupils' resilience, independence, decision-making and thinking skills, using exciting links between other subjects to further develop their understanding and knowledge.

Safeguarding is effective.

As the designated safeguarding leader, you ensure that all safeguarding records are well organised, clear and fit for purpose. All the necessary checks are in place before an adult starts working or volunteering at the school. You and the governors have a clear understanding of safer recruitment procedures. You provide staff and governors with up-to-date, relevant training. Pupils' safety is always a high priority.

Good-quality risk assessments during the new building programme ensured that pupils were kept safe at all times.

You are diligent in monitoring referrals and concerns made to you regarding vulnerable pupils. All relevant documentation is thorough, with a clear chronology. School records show few recent behavioural incidents have occurred and where they have, appropriate actions were taken.

Inspection findings

- My first key line of enquiry looked at how well current pupils are doing across the school. This was to ascertain if published performance results, which were broadly in line or above those seen nationally in 2017, are likely to be maintained or improved upon. Together, we observed teaching and learning in all classes. We also scrutinised the work in pupils' books in English and mathematics, and looked at the teachers' assessments.
- Your precise analysis of performance information shows that pupils in all year groups are making good progress from their various starting points in English and mathematics. It also indicates that a greater proportion of pupils are on track to reach the expected and higher standards in these subjects. This indicates that pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are likely to be maintained or improved upon at the end of Year 6 and Year 2.
- The proportion of children achieving the expected standard of a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has been above the national figure for the past two years. Through good teaching and learning, the current Reception children continue to make good progress from their various starting points, indicating that standards are likely to remain high. Phonics is taught effectively in the early years and key stage 1. Evidence indicates that results in the Year 1 phonics screening check will again remain broadly in line with those seen nationally.
- The next line of enquiry was to consider if pupils have sufficient opportunities to apply their literacy skills when writing across different subjects, which was an area to develop identified by the previous inspection report.
- We saw examples in all classes where skills that pupils had developed in English and grammar lessons are carried across into other subjects. For example, Years 1 and 2 pupils identified properties of sand in science and then wrote informed instructions on how to build a sandcastle, applying their knowledge about wet and dry sand. Key stage 2 pupils used descriptive language, atmosphere in a setting and inference from a text to extend their writing skills and subject knowledge in historical and geographical contexts through topics such as 'Chocolate Adventure' and the First World War. Overall, this area for improvement has been effectively addressed.
- Moving forwards from the success of linking English skills in other subjects to improve pupils' learning and understanding, we agreed that providing pupils with more independent learning opportunities, involving a variety of subjects, would further develop pupils' thinking and understanding.

- The final line of enquiry was to look at the capacity of leaders to bring about sustained school improvement. Leaders, including governors, are involved in regular and varied monitoring activities. These give you an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. You have effectively developed the skills and knowledge of the English and mathematics subject leaders, along with the early years leader and special educational needs coordinator. They now have a secure understanding of the improvements they need to make in their areas of responsibility. Together, you check teachers' assessments of pupils' progress. Pupils who begin to fall behind are identified quickly and effective support is put in place. For example, leaders have ensured that the school's small group of disadvantaged pupils across the school do as well as other pupils.
- Your rigorous monitoring informs the priorities and actions in the school development plan. The impact of these actions is checked by senior leaders and governors regularly to ensure continuous improvements in teaching and learning, and pupils' outcomes. You use the expertise within your local school cluster and the local authority to continually develop your leadership skills. Inspection evidence indicates that leaders and governors have good capacity to further improve the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they provide more opportunities for independent learning, to deepen pupils' understanding by further developing effective cross-curricular links that meet the needs of, and inspire, the pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Harrison
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, other leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority. I spoke to a group of pupils. I looked at a range of documentation, including information about the school's self-evaluation and plans for future improvement. Additionally, I examined policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including the school's single central record of pre-employment checks on staff. I visited all classrooms within the school to observe pupils' learning and scrutinised the work in pupils' books. The views of 23 parents

and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, along with those of two parents who I spoke to, and the written views of 15 parents from the free-text service. I also considered the responses of 12 staff and 15 pupils who completed their relevant Ofsted online surveys.