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Dear Mrs de Looze

Short inspection of Belton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Belton Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average-sized school. You know the school well. Your strong and creative leadership has resulted in a cohesive team that provides pupils with a well-rounded education in a nurturing environment. You have successfully led improvements to the quality of teaching and raised pupils' achievement. Staff and governors value your good work. Parents express high levels of satisfaction and appreciation for how approachable and caring you and the staff are. As one parent explained, 'I cannot fault the school, and the teachers can't do enough for the children.' Another parent commented, 'My children love school and are really encouraged to strive to achieve.'

You have accurately evaluated the school's strengths and areas for development. You have a clear plan for improvement and you work effectively with your team to tackle weaknesses. You make frequent checks on the quality of teaching and provide training and support for staff where needed. You hold teachers rigorously to account for the progress their pupils are making. This sharp focus on securing good-quality teaching throughout the school is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

Analysis of the school's own assessment data and pupils' work show that most pupils are making good progress in each year group, although there are some

inconsistencies in mathematics. Standard assessment tests in 2017 show that pupils left Year 2 with attainment well above the national average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. The teaching of reading is a real strength of the school. Pupils told me about their passion for books and spoke animatedly about a wide range of literature. One girl commented on the class book they were reading, 'It's strange because this book is really funny and sad; it makes you think.'

You and your team have developed the curriculum thoughtfully. It is broad and balanced. It provides engaging topics and places a high emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff make sure that both the indoor and outdoor environments are vibrant and attractive. Despite being a small school, you have been able to offer a good range of sports and competitions. You have been awarded the Schools Games Mark at gold level in recognition of this. You actively celebrate pupils' achievements. Consequently, pupils feel valued and are motivated to achieve highly.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development remain a strength of the school. Pupils are polite, well mannered and have a lovely sense of fun. They are extremely proud of their school and were keen to tell me about how they enjoy their learning, especially topic work, physical education (PE), and the many exciting visits to places of educational interest they make. Pupils told me that they are very happy at this school. They feel safe and know that if there is ever a problem they can always trust the teachers and support staff to listen and to help them. Pupils said that there is very little bullying but if they feel they are being bullied then a member of staff will always make sure that things are sorted out.

In the early years, pupils make good progress overall. The presentation of the indoor and outdoor areas is bright, attractive and skilfully organised to promote learning. As we saw the children engaged in their lesson, there were warm positive relationships and a calm, purposeful atmosphere. There is a well-planned exciting curriculum; for example, children had just completed the topic 'The scarecrows' wedding', during which they had spent time on a farm, had a visiting florist and celebrated the recent royal wedding.

You have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. A higher proportion of pupils are making very strong progress in mathematics in key stage 2 than at the time of the last inspection. However, progress and standards in mathematics are currently not as good as in reading and writing. You have begun to improve subject leadership by developing training for teachers and a positive culture of continuous improvement and reflective practice. There is more to be done to ensure their strong influence on the drive for school improvement.

Pupils have historically left the school in Year 5 to move on to the high school. This is the first year that the school has extended to include Year 6. You and the governors have managed this effectively with support from the local authority, including developing the building. Training for the Year 6 teacher relating to the curriculum, and statutory assessment testing, has also been a priority; this has been well planned and implemented. You have actively listened to the Year 6 pupils and

formally gained their views on their experience. Pupils were very positive. One pupil explained, 'It has been challenging, but I have enjoyed the responsibilities and the extra fun.' There is, however, further work needed to embed the curriculum, to ensure that all pupils make good progress in Year 6.

Governors know the school well. They are highly committed to the school and work hard with you to promote its unique vision and ethos. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through monitoring visits, meetings and scrutiny of assessment and external reports. Governors hold you and your staff to account effectively.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your leaders and the governing body have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The safeguarding and the well-being of pupils are of the utmost priority. Effective training for staff is in place and they are aware of the latest safeguarding guidance. Records are detailed and secure.

You, your leaders and other staff know individual pupils and families well. You liaise with external agencies and actively seek help for families. Parents said that they felt that they could come and talk to you or other members of staff if they had a concern. One parent explained, when going through some difficulties, 'The school staff have been so kind; they helped me get the right support and made sure my children didn't fall behind by giving them extra care and attention.' You employ an education welfare officer so that there is time available for families when needed. Attendance has been consistently above the national average since the last inspection. You have made sure that pupils know whom to speak to in school if they are worried.

A range of curriculum activities help pupils to have an understanding of how to keep safe. For example, the police were in school during the inspection to talk to the pupils, and then to parents and carers, about child exploitation and online protection.

Inspection findings

- You analyse the performance of different groups of pupils, but due to small numbers it is difficult to establish patterns. You do, however, carefully consider each pupil at an individual level. You use the pupil-premium grant effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Leaders are highly skilled and passionate about inclusion and work in strong partnership with parents and outside agencies to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum.
- The proportion of Year 2 pupils who were working at greater depth in reading in 2017 was well above the national average and above average in mathematics. However, there have not been any pupils working at greater depth in writing for the past two years. You have taken successful action to reverse this trend through ensuring that more challenge is provided for pupils. Assessments and the

evidence seen in books show pupils working at greater depth in writing in key stage 1.

- The school has comprehensive assessment data for key stage 2, which shows pupils to be making good progress in reading and writing, but fewer pupils to be making good progress in mathematics. You have not had any external test results to inform or confirm that judgement. You do, however, actively liaise with other schools to have work moderated and gain external views from professional advisers. Your assessment procedure is rigorous: you monitor teaching, look in books, talk to pupils and analyse test results.
- You have identified mathematics as an improvement priority and there is a specific focus on providing more challenge and developing pupils' mathematical problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- You have, through high expectations and a passion for reflective practice, worked hard to establish a culture of continuous improvement within the school. You make sure that all staff gain appropriate training and that staff share good practice by observing each other teach. You are a well-established member of the collaboration of schools, the 'Be Skilled Trust', a professional partnership which further supports staff development and access to resources.
- Since the last inspection, you have built the capacity of subject leaders through training and support to increase their knowledge and skills. There is currently a mixed picture of success. Subject leaders are able to demonstrate a good understanding of their roles. They carry out leadership activities, including the development of resources within the school; they work alongside staff; and formally report to governors. However, they have not carried out rigorous monitoring and evaluation, so they do not know precisely the strengths and next steps required in their areas of responsibility. As a result, they do not influence school improvement strongly enough.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- subject leaders develop their skills to secure consistently strong teaching and outcomes for pupils in their areas of responsibility
- pupils are given more opportunities to solve challenging and complex problems in mathematics, so they become confident mathematicians, and more pupils achieve national and above-national expectations
- the school continues to embed and strengthen the Year 6 curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Lindsay Alldis
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, other leaders and governors to discuss the school's progress since the last inspection. I also spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority and met with your commissioned school improvement adviser. I met with groups of parents at the beginning of the school day. I spoke with pupils informally during the day and held a meeting with a group of pupils from a range of year groups and listened to some individual readers. I scrutinised a wide range of information, including policies and records relating to safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, its plans for improvement and its review of spending on the pupil premium and the PE and sport premium. I looked at assessment information for previous year groups and those pupils currently in the school. I considered the 24 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, including 16 free-text responses, and the nine responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. Together, we conducted a focused walk around the whole school and observed learning in several classes.