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3 July 2018

Mrs Trudy Emberson
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Dear Mrs Emberson

Short inspection of Three Bridges Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 2018 with Becky Greenhalgh, 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 September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since joining the school in September 2015, you have developed an extended leadership team who share your vision and ethos. Together, you are ambitious for pupils and staff and have introduced changes that enable pupils across the school to achieve well both academically and personally. This is reflected in one of the many comments written by parents. One wrote: 'I strongly believe this school nurtures pupils to have a passion for learning while developing their social skills to be responsible, thoughtful children who continue to grow.'

Working closely with your skilled governors, you have led the expansion of the school towards becoming a three-form entry primary school. This has included managing a substantial building project to increase and improve the quality of the accommodation for pupils and for the administration staff. You have improved the internal accommodation as well as the school grounds to provide good-quality facilities in which pupils learn and play. During this period, there have been changes to both the leadership team and the teaching team. You have improved relationships and communications with parents, who now have a greater understanding of how well their children are achieving in school.

You have created a culture in which staff feel empowered to take risks and try new ideas to improve their work. They are passionate about the school and strive to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they should. They work closely as a team

and take every opportunity to share their ideas and learn from each other. One of the strengths of the teaching team is their ability to reflect on their work and to look for ways in which they can become even better teachers. They particularly value the training and development you provide. You have given thought to the development of your middle leaders to give them the opportunity to lead and so increase the capacity of leadership and ensure that there are plans in place should a member of staff leave the school.

Pupils across the school are warmly welcomed into a bright and attractive learning environment where they learn well and develop positive relationships with adults and each other. Pupils enjoy school and they say they like learning. This is reflected in their attendance which is improving and is broadly in line with the attendance of all pupils nationally. Pupils particularly value and enjoy the rich diversity of cultures within the school population. They say that all pupils are treated equally and fairly, while differences are celebrated. Pupils say that discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated. Particularly impressive is that they know and understand the school's values and how these are represented in the daily life of the classroom. One of the parents wrote: 'The school encourages my child to enjoy learning, discovery and values such as kindness, empathy and honesty. These are values I fully support.'

You, your leaders and your governors know the school well. You have acted quickly to reverse the decline in standards by taking swift action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Upon joining the school, you evaluated the quality of education. You set in place plans to address the issues for improvement from the previous inspection and to ensure that pupils across the school achieved well. You have worked with your staff and governors to create plans that will further strengthen the quality of education. You know that pupils do not always present their work to a high standard. You are planning to change the way in which pupils' performance is recorded to make it more manageable for teachers. This will help teachers to make more effective use of all available information to plan and implement actions that will further improve pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding that permeates all aspects of the school's work. The school has a number of pupils and families whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable and staff will go the extra mile to ensure that these pupils receive the right support in a timely way. All staff have been trained to recognise the signs that a child may be at risk from harm and so they know exactly what to do should they have a concern. A new electronic system allows records to be kept securely and shared with other parties when necessary. There are good relationships with specialists from other agencies to support pupils and their families.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They point to the high quality of care provided by adults. They know that adults take their concerns seriously and will quickly act to help should they have a problem. Pupils understand about different forms of bullying, including that related to mobile devices, but they are adamant that it rarely

occurs. Through the curriculum and assemblies, pupils are taught to keep themselves safe in and outside of school. They know about risks from physical harm, including that related to roads and substances. They have also been taught about potential dangers associated with modern technology. Pupils are very aware that they should not provide personal information or respond to requests for information from unknown sources.

Inspection findings

- In addition to reviewing the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils, we also agreed to evaluate the following aspects of the school's work:
 - how well pupils currently in school achieve in reading, writing and mathematics
 - the extent to which the quality of teaching, learning and assessment enables all pupils to progress as rapidly as they should
 - the effectiveness of actions taken by school leaders to address the decline in pupils' outcomes.
- Recent published performance data for the school has been disappointing. This has largely been due to a legacy of underachievement that has taken time to reverse. However, owing to actions taken by school leaders, pupils currently in school are making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because the inclusion leader works closely with teachers and teaching assistants to identify pupils' specific barriers to learning. This helps adults plan precise lessons or interventions that enable pupils to overcome their difficulties. The most able pupils are provided with extra challenges when they demonstrate that they are ready to complete harder work. Although there are few disadvantaged pupils in some cohorts, staff are very aware that these pupils may need particular support to help them to learn as well as other pupils. Consequently, these pupils are catching up with their classmates quickly.
- Pupils, both boys and girls, are enthusiastic readers. They enjoy reading and talk about the books they have read with pride. Owing to the improvements to the teaching of phonics, pupils in key stage 1 use their knowledge to read unfamiliar words accurately. Teachers have had training in phonics and so this aspect of reading is now taught consistently well across the school. Parents are now better informed about the approach to teaching reading and so are able to support their children at home. By the end of Year 6, pupils read confidently, using punctuation to read for meaning and with good expression. They recall in detail what they have previously read, and they answer questions about the text thoughtfully, drawing upon their skills and understanding.
- Work in pupils' books shows that they have made rapid gains across the school in writing. Although the presentation of their work is sometimes untidy, pupils have a secure grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar to write fluently across a range of different subjects. The leader for English has improved the way in which teachers plan and has built in opportunities for pupils to write when learning other subjects. He has also increased the range and variety of resources to help

teachers to inspire pupils to write. One of the strengths of writing is that pupils have a clear sense of audience and purpose. For example, one pupil in Year 4 writing about King Arthur, wrote: 'And no reader, that isn't a siren. It's King Arthur's alarm set for one o'clock in the afternoon. Lazy chap that he is.'

- The quality of work seen in pupils' mathematics books is impressive. It shows clear progress for all groups of pupils. Work builds progressively on what has already been learned so that pupils extend their skills and knowledge systematically, embedding their understanding. By the end of Year 2, pupils work confidently with numbers beyond one hundred and apply their skills to solve complicated word problems. By the end of Year 6, there is evidence of strong progress shown in reasoning and application of number. This enables pupils to solve complex word problems involving large numbers and negative numbers. There are examples of pupils using their numeracy skills in other subjects, including history, science and geography, so they have a good understanding of the purpose of learning mathematics. Just occasionally the presentation of their work is not as good as it should be and this can lead to inaccuracies in some calculations.
- One of the reasons that pupils make good progress in mathematics is because the quality of teaching is effective. Owing to actions taken by leaders, teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and they use this effectively to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers are skilled at asking pupils questions that probe their thinking and deepen their learning and so they progress well. The mathematics leader introduced a new scheme for teaching mathematics and this has strengthened teachers' subject knowledge. This has helped pupils to progress well in their mathematical development.
- Teachers have high expectations and they provide work and activities that match pupils' interests and learning needs. This is because they have a clear understanding of the standards at which pupils are learning and so they provide work that builds on what pupils already know and can do. They also provide opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and mathematical skills when learning other subjects. For example in a Year 6 class, the teacher asked pupils to plan and design their own theme park. Pupils then had to consider the cost for each activity and think about the price of tickets in order to work out whether they made a profit or loss. Pupils were thoroughly engaged with this activity that linked with their work on enterprise.
- Teachers ensure that work provided for pupils builds on their prior learning and that it is challenging for the different groups of pupils, including those who are most able. Teachers provide constructive feedback and guidance in line with the school's policy so that pupils are clear about how their work may be improved. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils and so pupils have positive attitudes towards work and they are keen to do well. Pupils are responsive to teachers' instructions so that no learning time is lost. The large majority of parents who responded to the online survey agreed or strongly agreed that their children are taught well. One parent wrote: 'The teachers put so much effort into making learning more interesting for the children, combining art, craft, music and history to improve their English and maths and open their eyes to new things. Very imaginative and learning full of brilliant ideas.'

- There is a very supportive culture among staff that has been generated by school leaders. As a result, teachers actively engage with training and development to help them to improve their skills. Leaders at all levels are well trained to offer guidance and support to less experienced colleagues. This has brought about a consistent approach to teaching and this has undoubtedly helped to raise pupils' achievement. Teachers across the school are skilled in using available performance data to guide their teaching. However, leaders are aware that the current systems are too unwieldy and do not give a clear enough picture of pupils' progress from their different starting points. They also know that some teachers lack confidence when assessing pupils' understanding. They are sensibly providing support for this through joining with other schools to moderate pupils' work to establish a consistent standard.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils consistently present work in their books to a high standard
- teachers make effective use of improved assessment information to plan their priorities for teaching and learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspectors observed teaching across the school, often accompanied by school leaders. They looked at work in pupils' books and they listened to pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6. Inspectors observed pupils in classrooms, the playground and as they moved around the school. Meetings were held with school leaders, groups of pupils and with governors. A telephone discussion took place with a representative from the local authority. Inspectors took account of the 84 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and considered the many written responses on free-text. They looked at a number of documents including school development plans, information relating to pupils' learning and progress and minutes from governors' meetings. Information relating to how well the school keeps pupils safe was also evaluated.