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Mrs Meera Bulsara
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bulsara

Short inspection of Church Hill Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 3 July 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Parents and carers, pupils, staff and governors appreciate the welcoming family ethos and the tangible sense of care that is at the heart of the school.

You and the deputy headteacher work effectively together to set a clear focus on getting the best outcomes for pupils. You lead by example and have successfully brought together the whole leadership team. Together you have established a culture of continual improvement across the school.

Governors share the deep sense of care shown across the school. You ensure that they have an accurate understanding of the school. They check what is reported to them. They use their skills effectively to challenge and support you and other leaders who have responsibility.

Since the last inspection, the school has joined Bradgate Education Partnership (BEP). This has provided the school with highly effective opportunities to work collaboratively and develop effective systems for continual improvement. Leaders and teachers regularly work with colleagues from other schools to compare approaches and share good practice. Leaders are ensuring that there is a high level of consistency across classes and that teachers have a consistent understanding of age expectations. You have successfully sustained good teaching across the school.

Leaders know where there is strong practice and use this well to support others within and beyond the school.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve some aspects of teaching and learning further. The school has been particularly successful at raising teachers' expectations of the most able pupils and ensuring that they make good progress.

The school has had consistently higher attainment and achievement in mathematics over time than some other subjects within school. However, from attainment in mathematics and reading being just above national averages in 2015, there was a dip in outcomes for pupils in 2016, particularly in reading. You took effective action to raise standards in reading and writing. Outcomes in all subjects at the end of key stage 1 are now broadly in line with national averages. Improving the teaching of reading continues to be a high priority in the school's improvement plan.

You have ensured that pupils' good behaviour and attitudes are maintained and built upon. Pupils are proud of their school. Pupils enjoy their bright, well-organised and welcoming environment. They told me that 'we all treat each other the same... we're a family.' Pupils enjoy responsibilities, such as being a school councillor.

The school's chosen approach to the curriculum is ensuring that pupils build up determination, resilience and independence, in line with school values. Adults across the school are positive role models. However, you recognise that the overall framework of knowledge and concepts which you want pupils to learn is not as well developed as it is in English and mathematics.

There are strong links with Church Hill C of E Junior School. A highlight for pupils is the Year 2 residential trip, which promotes independence and confidence to be ready for their next steps. Revised assessment procedures are improving the identification of pupils' needs. You are determined that assessment should be used well to identify what pupils need to learn next and that this continues to be a focus moving forward.

Parents are unanimous that their children are happy, safe and looked after well. They value the responsive teachers and high expectations of the headteacher. They are highly positive about careful induction for their children as they join the school, which ensures that they make a confident start in their Reception Year. Parents appreciate the before-school childcare provided by the school. Pupils enjoy being active and being with friends to start off their school day.

You ensure that pupils and parents are reminded of the importance of attendance. Rates of attendance are close to national averages over time. You have stringent procedures to follow up absences, and support is put in place where appropriate. School leaders and governors recognise that this needs to be an ongoing priority.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You make sure that staff receive up-to-date training in keeping children safe. Staff are clear

about how to report a concern about a child's welfare, should one arise. You ensure that vetting checks take place before an adult starts working at the school. The well-organised school business manager provides effective administrative support. Governors receive appropriate safeguarding training and regularly check school procedures.

You keep detailed safeguarding records securely. These help you to work effectively with other agencies. You are tenacious in seeking support for pupils and their families when they need it. You and your staff know pupils well. You regularly discuss pupils' welfare, keeping this important aspect of the school's work at the forefront of everyone's mind. Parents value that you and your staff go 'above and beyond' to support children and families.

Pupils said that behaviour is good in school. They say that they feel safe because they trust adults to help them deal with issues when they arise. Pupils are taught about different aspects of safety, such as keeping themselves safe online, fire safety and personal safety.

Inspection findings

- You have reviewed the approach to teaching reading, including phonics. Teachers are now consistently ensuring that phonics is used well in reading and also writing. You have given a high priority to increasing the frequency of reading for every pupil. Teachers use a range of challenging and interesting texts to extend pupils' vocabulary and understanding. Pupils' limited range of vocabulary to enable them to deepen their understanding of what they read has been identified by the school as a key barrier to learning, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders know that there is still work to be done on these aspects. Leaders are continually trying to find ways to support and encourage all parents to read regularly with their children, for example inviting families in for a 'reading café'. Leaders are committed to pursuing this important aspect of partnership with parents.
- Leaders have researched a range of approaches to teaching reading and used these to revise current school policy. Your school self-evaluation has identified that the school's recent shift to daily reading as a whole class in Year 2 is having a positive impact. Current school data shows that outcomes have strengthened for many pupils this year. You have set it as a clear priority to embed this policy and use lessons learned to innovate and adapt approaches across all year groups.
- You identified that assessment for tracking pupils' ongoing progress was not helping teachers to identify effectively what pupils needed to learn next to secure rapid progress for all. You have recently introduced a new system for tracking. Information from the tracking system is accurate and consistent with the evidence in pupils' books. Teachers are more confident in using this improved information to identify what pupils need to learn next and are confident about age expectations. Middle leaders and teachers spoke positively about the school's introduction of weekly team planning this year. They said that this has increased their consistency in implementing school policies, as well as having a positive impact on their workload.

- You are working closely with middle leaders to analyse the barriers to learning for less confident pupils and those pupils who have complex needs. This is starting to improve the accuracy and impact of adjustments to teaching for these pupils, although leaders recognise that there is more to be done to secure more rapid progress for the pupils.
- All leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities for securing best outcomes for pupils across the school. Senior leaders and governors are being well supported by BEP to effectively develop the skills of middle leaders and teachers.
- You ensure that interesting topics are used effectively to link learning across subjects. In line with the school's chosen approach, teachers plan enriching experiences and explicitly identify opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of world issues. For example, the Year 2 topic, 'Chocolicious', involved looking at issues of fair trade and included an informative and enjoyable visit to explore the production of chocolate. However, you recognise that the framework of knowledge and concepts for other subjects taught through topic themes is not as well developed as it is in English and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers embed improvements to the teaching of reading so that pupils extend their vocabulary and deepen their understanding of what they are reading
- teachers use assessment information precisely to move learning forward rapidly for different pupils
- the knowledge and concepts to be taught across the school for other subjects are mapped out as clearly as those in English and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the Bradgate Education Partnership, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mandy Wilding
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher and shared my lines of enquiry. I met with staff with leadership responsibilities for reading, writing, mathematics, physical education, pupil premium, and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. I met with the chair of governors and other

members of the governing body. I met with a representative of BEP. I spoke with pupils informally in class and held a more formal meeting with pupils from Year 2. I also listened to some pupils read. You and I jointly visited classes to observe pupils learning, speak with them and look at their books. We examined a range of pupils' books from across the school.

I reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and its plans for further improvement. I considered a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding. I examined the school's website and checked on the publication of specified information. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day and considered the responses of 22 parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 21 free-text responses. I also considered the 25 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.