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Mrs Maxine Blackburn
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Blackburn

Short inspection of Bempton Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 October 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 January 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following a period of considerable turbulence, including a number of interim headteachers, your appointment in September 2018 as executive headteacher across two schools has stabilised Bempton Primary School. You have swiftly established a strong and positive ethos, engaged staff and pupils and have made considerable improvements in developing stronger community links.

Since the last inspection, all teaching staff are new to the school. Staff and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. You have gained the full support of your staff, who are unanimously proud to work in the school. Staff morale is high, as shown by the staff survey completed during the inspection. Under your determined and reflective leadership, you are building a strong and ambitious leadership team. Your deputy headteacher and subject leaders are eager to play their part in securing further improvements in the school's work, building on the good education that pupils already receive.

You work very well with your deputy headteacher and together make a formidable team with a shared vision, unwavering belief and the determination to ensure that every child has the right to a good education. As a result, pupils in the school are nurtured and very well supported. Consequently, they develop into mature and thoughtful individuals who, by Year 6, are ready for their next step in education. Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school and the quality of education it provides for their children. Many spoke to me and their sentiments were captured well by the following view: 'As a parent, I have received fantastic

support from the staff who have always shown a genuine commitment and passion for my child's development and well-being. The atmosphere here is very positive. It's a smashing little school – we couldn't be happier.'

The governing body has a clear strategic role and holds leaders to account because governors are skilled, knowledgeable and passionate about their school. As a result, they did not shy away from taking the difficult decisions around leadership and worked hard to ensure the collaboration and executive headteacher appointment were the best for the school.

The high standards of pupils' behaviour and personal development noted at the time of the last inspection continue to be maintained. This is evident in the calm and orderly atmosphere around the school; in how well pupils work together in lessons; in the way they socialise, eat together and play at break- and lunchtimes; and the interest they have in sharing their work with each other and visitors. Pupils say that they enjoy learning about different religions and beliefs and are interested in people from different and diverse backgrounds. Pupils describe the school as being a 'community' where everyone is respected, kind and compassionate. Pupils who made their views known feel very safe and are happy to come to school. This is endorsed by parents in their responses to the Ofsted online survey.

Since taking up the post of executive headteacher, you have ensured that the issues from the last inspection have been addressed, such as developing middle leadership and improving teaching and learning. Outcomes in 2018 show that these improvements have helped raise the standards to above national averages in the national assessment testing in Year 2 and Year 6 reading, writing and mathematics. Strong outcomes at the end of early years and key stage 1 show that pupils are well prepared for their next stage of learning. However, we agreed that the new mathematics curriculum, recently introduced, needs to be embedded. This is especially important for the most able pupils, by making sure that they are given work that challenges their thinking and helps them demonstrate how they reason and solve problems. We also looked at longer pieces of writing and saw rapid improvement for most pupils; however, once again, we agreed that there was more to do to enable the most able pupils to achieve a greater depth of understanding in their writing across both key stages.

You have established effective procedures to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Teachers have clear targets linked to pupils' progress and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. You meet with teachers every half term to check with them on the progress that their classes are making, and put in place support for any pupils making slower progress or showing signs of falling behind. These meetings illustrate the way in which you use the well-established systems to check the quality of the school's work and gain a shrewd understanding of what is working well and where improvement is needed. Consequently, the school's self-evaluation is accurate and school development plan is precise because it focuses on pupils' progress and improvements.

The curriculum changes you have introduced are providing a vibrant and exciting

experience for pupils in the school. Pupils have particularly rich opportunities in art, music and science. You are determined to broaden pupils' experiences within and beyond the school community. Consequently, pupils enjoy entering local and national competitions, as well as taking part in community events, for example the village Christmas fair. Pupils say that they enjoy a good range of physical education and sporting activities, as well as plenty of lunchtime and after-school clubs.

Children in early years flourish as a result of the interesting curriculum. The teacher and nursery nurse listen carefully to children and pose thought-provoking questions to extend children's ideas and to inform planning. Adults manage a mixed range of ages, from the children in Nursery to those at the end of Reception. Younger children benefit from the positive role models that older children provide. There is a strong and consistent approach to reading and writing, with plenty of opportunities to practise their letters and writing. Learning follows children's interests. For example, a child was reading a book on dinosaurs and explaining features and habitats. It excited the children, especially the boys, who then went outside to build a dinosaur cave. However, we agreed that there was more to be done to develop children's skills in mathematics, especially in the outdoor area.

In moving the school forward, you have made good use of the expertise and advice from the local authority. Overall, the local authority has supported you and the school well in developing the quality of education further. You are now building on the expertise across the collaboration, between your two schools, to further share good practice and to continue to develop staff.

Safeguarding is effective.

The arrangements for safeguarding are fit for purpose.

A strong culture of safeguarding is at the heart of daily life in the school. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. The overwhelming majority of parents agree. Meticulous safer recruitment practices are in place. Record keeping, personnel files and the school's register are exemplary. Child protection training for all staff is systematically updated, including the latest information on radicalisation. Safeguarding is a standing item at meetings, including staff briefings. Training is good and uses outside agencies, for example, the NSPCC and the police, to ensure that staff and pupils are aware of how to be safe both in school and in the community. Child protection is regularly revisited with all staff.

Senior leaders and governors are scrupulous in ensuring that the systems and procedures are compliant and that any aspect of concern is followed up quickly. When concerns are raised, precise actions and outcomes are tracked thoroughly. Routine monitoring by senior leaders and evaluation by the safeguarding governor ensure that information is checked and accurate and identifies whether anything else needs to be done.

Staff provide high-quality support in a nurturing environment. The welfare and care of the pupils are of paramount importance. Nothing is left to chance and the school

has ensured that it responds to local safeguarding concerns. For example, pupils were keen to tell me about how to keep themselves safe on the farm.

Inspection findings

- As part of the inspection, I focused on teaching in mathematics and particularly on how well teachers challenge and extend pupils' learning. This was because pupils' performance in tests in recent years has not been consistently strong. From our discussions, it was clear that you had already identified the need to develop mathematics further, following the introduction of a new mathematics scheme. In this smaller than average-sized primary school, test results can vary considerably because of the small numbers taking the tests. In the 2018 national assessments, mathematics by the end of Years 2 and 6 shows improved outcomes, with pupils at or just above the national averages.
- In mathematics, teachers in the school provide a range of challenges and usually question pupils well to develop their understanding. However, we agreed that pupils are not getting enough practice in explaining their thinking and how they have solved problems, especially when completing more complex problems. In addition, work is sometimes too easy, especially for the most able pupils. We agreed that pupils need more challenge.
- Another focus for the inspection was the extent to which leaders have been successful in improving the quality of pupils' writing. Writing at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 shows that more pupils achieved a greater depth of understanding in their writing. The previous inspection report had indicated that pupils did not write often enough in subjects other than English. As a result, you have introduced 'WOW books', which give pupils opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences. You have used links with other schools to enable teachers to compare and check the accuracy of their assessments. Teachers have also done this in school, and external checks made by the local authority have confirmed that teachers are assessing pupils' written work accurately.
- Working with your staff, you have developed how writing is taught and assessed so that teachers and pupils understand what an effective piece of writing looks like. We saw pupils confident in explaining their writing; for example, a Year 6 pupil was able to evaluate the work of the artist David Hockney, describing it as 'heartfelt and influential'. However, we agreed that the most able pupils were not using good reading to model good writing and therefore some work, while accurate, did not demonstrate creativity.
- My third line of enquiry involved exploring how far middle leaders' work is helping pupils in the school to make rapid progress. This was identified as an area for improvement in the previous inspection. However, since the last inspection, all staff are new to the school. You have rigorously addressed this issue, ensuring that middle leaders are driving improvements in their subjects. All leaders have strong subject knowledge and understand their role in monitoring the quality of teaching. They have taken part in paired observations and worked with external trainers to further deepen their leadership role. This has helped to improve the

quality and consistency of teaching. We agreed that members of the team are confident in leading their areas. The results from the 2018 national assessments and the school's own data on pupils' outcomes show that standards have improved for all pupils in all subject areas.

- My next line of enquiry was to look at how far the curriculum is meeting the needs of all pupils and helping to improve their attendance. You have reviewed your curriculum and have worked with your teachers to plan a curriculum that excites and engages the pupils. You introduced this and have planned the change effectively, ensuring that teachers have a clear understanding of the curriculum's aims and objectives. This well-planned curriculum is interesting and engaging. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved.
- Our joint visits to classrooms saw pupils engaging with a wide range of topics and making clear links between subjects. There was tangible excitement from pupils in learning new skills. For example, a group of Year 2 and Year 3 pupils were confident in playing on a recorder a piece of music they had just learned. One pupil told me, 'This will knock your socks off.' He was not wrong.
- Pupils' attendance has improved because the school has clear processes and tracks attendance carefully. You have a range of strategies in place both to support and challenge families. The attendance rewards system is well understood by pupils and they enjoy receiving certificates in assemblies, as well as the weekly attendance awards for their class. The attendance and administration officer is very persistent, producing weekly attendance information and swiftly following up any absence. School systems are comprehensive. As a result, pupils and parents understand the importance of good attendance. One group of pupils were really concerned that a classmate was absent and put together a strategy as to how they would help that pupil catch up on missed work. They said, 'It's important that we don't miss any of our learning.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that the most able pupils:

- have more opportunities to develop reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics, so that they make even better progress and attain highly
- are given even more opportunities to develop their own writing style and creativity firmly based on good models of reading and writing in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Jen Cave
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held discussions with you and your deputy headteacher and leaders about the key lines of enquiry for this inspection. I considered leaders' evaluation of the quality of education, plans for future improvement and information about current pupils' learning.

I met with other leaders, teachers, your local authority school improvement officer and three governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I reviewed documents such as the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, and leaders' monitoring and analysis of the progress pupils make. The school's safeguarding arrangements, records, files and documentation were also examined.

I observed pupils learning and looked at examples of pupils' work to explore the progress they are making over time, especially in mathematics and writing. I spoke with pupils informally during lessons regarding their learning and heard two Year 2 pupils and two Year 6 pupils read.

I considered the views of eight parents who had responded to Parent View and those of the eight parents who had left comments on the Parent View free-text facility. I also took account of the views of 15 parents who spoke to me at the beginning of the school day. The views of four staff who completed Ofsted's staff questionnaire were also taken into account. No pupils had completed the online pupil questionnaire.