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17 October 2018

Miss Julie Lawrence
Bedgrove Infant School
Ingram Avenue
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire
HP21 9DJ

Dear Miss Lawrence

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Bedgrove Infant School

Following my visit with Susan Cox and Christopher Crouch, Ofsted Inspectors, to your school on 2 October 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about outcomes for pupils at the school.

Evidence

We met with you, senior and middle leaders, the chair of governors and two other governors. We observed learning in all classes and age groups, including the Nursery. All observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders, and we looked at pupils' work together. We analysed a range of the school's documentation, including the minutes of the governing body's meetings and the school improvement plan. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. We met with pupils and heard three Year 2 pupils read. We also gathered the views of several pupils throughout the day. We scrutinised the single central record of recruitment checks and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and governors have taken effective action to maintain the high standards of pupils' outcomes identified at the previous section 5 inspection.

Context

The school is larger than the average-sized infant school. The proportions of pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are below those seen nationally.

The previous headteacher, who was in post at the time of the school's last full inspection, in June 2013, retired in July 2017. The current headteacher took up her appointment in September 2017, after previously serving as the school's deputy headteacher. At the same time, the school's new deputy headteacher was appointed, joining Bedgrove Infant from another school. The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the early years leader, who also holds responsibility for initial teacher training.

There have been numerous changes in the staff team since the previous inspection. In July 2018, six teaching staff left the school, including the mathematics leader. In September 2018, seven new teachers joined, including the special educational needs coordinator. As a result, there are new staff in each year group. The chair of governors resigned and left in July 2018. The current chair of the governing body took up post in September 2018, after having served as the vice-chair.

In partnership with Bourton Meadow Initial Teacher Training Centre, which is attached to Bourton Meadow School, Bedgrove Infant School offers school-based initial teacher training programmes. A training room is located on-site, and trainees and school staff can access a wide range of professional development courses.

Inspection findings

Since the previous inspection, and following the previous headteacher's retirement, the school has undergone a period of substantial change. Nevertheless, it remains in capable hands as you know the school very well, having served as the school's deputy headteacher. You candidly describe the 'luxury' of having had time to prepare to take up the mantle of headship. Consequently, at the earliest opportunity, you formed your own exacting view of what needed to change and how. You wasted no time in setting out your plans for improvement. From the word go, you have led with a deep-seated resolve to serve the pupils well, in the context of a changeable and testing first year.

You have not faltered in your resolve. The quality of leadership and management is superb. In your first term as headteacher, you quickly identified a dip in standards and promptly set out your stall, demonstrating ambition and urgency. In doing so, you successfully raised the bar even higher. Staff share your determination to see pupils succeed. Skilfully supported by other senior leaders and governors, you have demonstrated an unflinching determination to overhaul the school's systems and processes in a whole host of regards, such as the performance management of staff. You are determined to ensure that pupils, including children in the early years, achieve the highest standards. The school's improvement planning is detailed and

insightful, and strongly reflects your ambition. Plans exemplify your meticulous attention to detail and are supported well by meaningful actions with timely monitoring tasks, including those led by governors. Improvement actions are implemented terrifically well. As a result, in a relatively short space of time, you have successfully reinstated high standards, holding high expectations of staff and pupils at the forefront of your work.

Forward thinking and astute planning are key to your success. With higher expectations set firmly in place, some staff chose to move on, including some to take up promotion. At the same time, you reorganised staffing, including middle leaders and support staff. During this phase, you ensured that staff were able to shadow more experienced colleagues and learn from one another, including in subject leadership. Staff also benefit greatly from a rich and varied menu of training at their fingertips. This year, staff are working as teams and many are rapidly developing the skills required for highly effective subject leadership. Nevertheless, you know that this is an aspect that could be strengthened further.

At the end of 2018, the fruits of your labours were clear, as pupils achieved high standards in all areas of learning and in all phases. At the end of Year 2, more pupils achieved or exceeded the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Outcomes in 2018 are likely to be well above those seen nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Also, in the Year 1 phonics screening check standards rose, with most pupils meeting the standard required. Standards remain high and pupils achieve exceptionally well. Now in your second year as a senior leadership team, you and your colleagues remain clear and uncompromising in your expectations.

The quality of teaching is excellent. Teachers hold high expectations and plan tasks thoughtfully to ensure that they are well matched to pupils' starting points and capabilities. For example, leaders' perceptive adaptations to the school's curriculum, including in mathematics, mean that the most able pupils are challenged well. Pupils work diligently and are particularly adept at supporting one another to achieve their very best. In writing, pupils write for a range of purposes in their 'epic books', taking inspiration from across the curriculum. They take great care and present their work well. Equally, in mathematics, teachers structure pupils' learning effectively. Adults question pupils thoughtfully and check that pupils' understanding is secure before moving on. As a result, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and the most able pupils, make great gains from their starting points and achieve very well.

Leaders' and governors' plans for pupil premium spending are excellent. These are kept under regular review. Staff produce termly pupil premium profiles and are highly alert to pupils who from time to time run the risk of falling behind. The quality of support on offer, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, is outstanding. A rich menu that includes pet and play therapy is in place. Leaders take care to adapt and modify interventions in line with pupils' additional needs. Furthermore, teaching assistants are intuitive and highly

skilled, pitching support at just the right level. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities benefit greatly and make rapid progress. Many achieve the same high standards as their peers.

Children in the early years achieve very well. Approximately one third of children join the school with skills and understanding below those typical for their age. Children make rapid progress across the early years because of the excellent quality of teaching. In 2018, the proportion of children at the end of the early years who achieved a good level of development increased notably from 2017. Provisional information shows that standards are likely to be above those seen nationally. Children settle in smoothly to the life of the school. Transition arrangements are exceptionally strong. Parents are fully involved from the very start of their association with the school. Opportunities to attend information workshops, such as the forthcoming curricular objective evenings, further strengthen this partnership.

Pupils behave well. The youngest children in the Nursery department have already settled well into the routines of school life as all adults share the high expectations. A small proportion of pupils who require additional support are nurtured and cared for and their needs are understood. Playtimes are happy, sociable occasions. Staff structure activities well and ensure that no one is left out. Pupils told inspectors that, 'Playtimes are fun.'

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Training, including for governors and newly appointed staff, is comprehensive and timely. All understand their responsibilities thoroughly. The school's policy and procedures are kept under watchful review. The safeguarding policy adheres well to the government's latest guidance. Leaders ensure that topics related to keeping safe are woven intuitively through the school's curriculum.

External support

The local authority's representatives have supported the school very well, particularly in the recent transition from well-established leadership arrangements. Advisers visit regularly and report in detail on the school's progress. You have appreciated this support, particularly in your first year of headship. As an outward-looking school you have forged equally strong partnerships further afield. Determined to maintain a forward momentum, your recent visit to an outstanding infant school in a different authority, helpfully sparked additional ideas to further strengthen the provision. You, with the support of external advisers, are determined to ensure that this school continues to flourish.

Priorities for further improvement

- Further develop the expertise of middle leadership teams, including those responsible for the wider curriculum, so that leaders become more accountable for the standards pupils achieve.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr
Her Majesty's Inspector