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Mrs Pam McBurnie
Headteacher
Bow Brickhill CofE VA Primary School
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Dear Mrs McBurnie

Short inspection of Bow Brickhill CofE VA Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 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 December 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. School leaders, including governors, have a shared commitment to providing good-quality teaching and learning, and to deliver the best possible outcomes for the pupils in their care. You and your assistant headteacher show passion, enthusiasm and determination which is shared by staff and parents. Parents are delighted with the quality of education you provide, and your staff feel that the school has moved forwards very positively under your continuing leadership.

Pupils are happy, friendly and well mannered. Leaders' knowledge of each pupil is impressive and this enables a more personalised approach to pupils' academic and social development. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. They listen carefully to their peers and teachers, showing respect for others. Pupils also appreciate the leadership opportunities on offer. For instance, pupils in Year 6 welcome the chance to adopt a school role such as a junior road safety officer or a play leader. Consequently, pupils feel that they have a voice. They are confident that staff will listen to them and take seriously their suggestions to make the school better.

Parents and carers are equally positive. They, too, feel that staff listen to them. One parent described that the school has a 'friendly and lovely atmosphere' saying that, 'You can always speak to the headteacher and see her everywhere!' These comments typify parents' responses. They are confident that their children make

good progress and that pupils are well cared for by staff.

Since the last inspection, you have introduced systems to check on the quality of teaching and assessment. You ensure that teachers work alongside leaders so that they can check on pupils' learning as a matter of routine. This allows staff to support pupils to move on in their learning through carefully managed interventions. As a result, over time, pupils make good progress. This is particularly the case in English and topic work. For example, provisional key stage 2 results and work in current pupils' books show that pupils make good progress in writing across the school.

Governors have an accurate and comprehensive view of the school. They ask pertinent questions of you and your leaders to ensure that you make improvements. For example, they are aware that leaders' actions have secured considerable improvements in pupils' writing. Improvements in the teaching of writing ensure that pupils make consistently good progress across the school. Similarly, governors are aware that there is more to do in the teaching of mathematics to ensure that teachers challenge pupils quickly enough.

You are disappointed by the provisional results of the recent national tests for pupils' progress in reading and mathematics at key stage 2. However, the books of pupils currently in Year 6 and Year 5 show good progress over time in both writing and mathematics. For example, their work on reasoning and problem-solving shows pupils rising to the challenge of using complex mathematical skills. Pupils' work in writing shows good progress, indicating great stamina to write at length. In recent years, the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check have been consistently strong. Similarly, attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 shows that the proportion of pupils achieving age-related expectations, and working at greater depths of understanding, is in line with or above the national average for reading, writing and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There are robust systems in place to check that adults at the school are safe to work with children. Staff receive regular safeguarding training, and leaders produce termly safeguarding bulletins for all staff, highlighting updates. Staff understand the procedures they must follow if they have concerns about a pupil. Leaders work effectively with multiple agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive appropriate support. Leaders ensure that clear and rigorous systems are effective in ensuring that pupils are safe if they are absent from school.

Governors receive up-to-date training on key safeguarding issues, including how to recognise the signs of radicalisation or extremism in young people. In-school monitoring systems are used effectively, and adults are confident in the action that they need to take if they have concerns about a pupil's welfare. Pupils say that there is no bullying in their school. They are confident that all adults will respond quickly and effectively to any concerns that they may have. Pupils play happily and

calmly together at playtimes.

Inspection findings

- Over the last few years, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been in line with or above national averages. Provisional results for 2018 indicate that attainment in mathematics at key stage 2 was in line with age-related expectations. However, leaders recognise that in the recent past pupils' progress in mathematics at key stage 2 has not been improving quickly enough.
- You and your leaders have already taken actions to pinpoint, and start to address, those areas where the teaching of mathematics could improve. You quickly acted upon external advice and support from a mathematics consultant, and teachers have responded well to the renewed approach to teaching mathematics. It is too early to determine the impact of this work on pupils' progress over time. You have identified where teachers need to provide pupils with more independent challenges in order to help them to think more deeply.
- During visits to lessons, it became evident that there are inconsistencies in the teaching of mathematics. Where the level of challenge requires pupils to apply their reasoning skills and knowledge in different situations, pupils make better progress. However, more work is needed to embed this fully in all classes.
- Some pupils attain very well at the end of key stage 1 in reading, and the attainment of Year 1 phonics has been consistently strong over the last three consecutive years. Teachers are developing pupils' interest in books and encouraging them to read. As a result, pupils enjoy reading and talk confidently about what they have read.
- Leaders and governors have accurately identified the school's need to improve further the teaching of reading. You have begun this term by looking closely at the effectiveness of daily guided-reading sessions, and subsequently you have introduced a strategy to teaching comprehension skills. This is providing some level of appropriate challenge, which evidence in pupils' books shows is beginning to have an impact, although it is not yet fully embedded across the school.
- Rightly, you and your team continue to seek continued improvement. You have introduced a new approach to teaching the wider curriculum this year to raise achievement further in writing and deepen pupils' learning and enjoyment of school. Staff have been involved in devising new topic-related vocabulary and good-quality resources which aim to ensure that pupils learn skills that can be applied across a variety of subjects. This is very new. You acknowledge that this approach will need evaluating fully at regular intervals to check that the new curriculum leads to the same above-average outcomes.
- Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in the early years. The new early years leader identifies and provides the right support so that children can catch up quickly. Alongside other leaders, including governors, the school has invested in the development of the outdoor learning space, providing a high-quality area to support children's independent learning. Consequently, children typically make good progress from when they enter the school in the

Reception Year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- further improve the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics through sustaining more effectively the improvements already made by sharing best practice across the school
- improve the quality of the reading curriculum so that pupils are able to apply a range of comprehension skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Mineza Maher
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held a discussion with you about the school's self-evaluation plan and current priorities. I spoke to two subject leaders (one of whom is your assistant headteacher and early years leader) to find out about their plans for improvement. I met with you to discuss the school's arrangements for child protection and safeguarding. I held a meeting with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also had a telephone conversation with the local authority's school improvement adviser. I talked to three staff members about both how they keep pupils safe and their own well-being. I observed learning, with you, in all classes. I talked to pupils about their work and looked at a range of books, mainly related to English and mathematics. There were 31 results from the pupil survey.

I evaluated a wide variety of documents, including the school's development plan, subject action plans, pupils' assessment information, governors' documentation, and records related to safeguarding. The views of parents were considered through the 33 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 10 free-text comments. I spoke to parents on the playground at the start of the school day. There were 13 responses to the staff survey.