

23 November 2018

Mr Brett Stevenson  
Headteacher  
Blakeney Primary School  
High Street  
Blakeney  
Gloucestershire  
GL15 4EB

Dear Mr Stevenson

### **Short inspection of Blakeney Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 November 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.

You are a well-respected leader of the school. You have an in-depth knowledge of pupils' specific needs and strive to provide the best pastoral and academic support that you can. Your thorough evaluations of the school's effectiveness have enabled you to identify the school's main priorities. As a result, you have taken concerted action to improve teaching so that it has a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

In the past, some staffing issues beyond your control meant that teaching did not routinely enable pupils to achieve well, particularly in writing. As a result, pupils' attainment in phonics, writing and mathematics at key stage 1 and writing at key stage 2 were low. You have provided teachers with training, which has improved teaching in these respects. Good teaching had a demonstrable impact on outcomes for Year 1 pupils last year and almost all pupils achieved expected standards in phonics. In addition, the vast majority of pupils achieved well in all subjects at the end of key stage 2.

Most current pupils, many of whom have low starting points, make effective progress. The extra help that you provide for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is particularly strong. A parent commented that the school was 'fantastic' in getting the help and support their child needed.

You make effective use of your special educational needs coordinator's expertise and her awareness of pupils' precise barriers to learning. This ensures that she works closely with teachers to provide pupils with the specific help that they need. Consequently, extra support that you provide is precisely focused on pupils' academic and pastoral needs. As a result of effective provision, pupils engage positively in their learning and several pupils are making strong academic progress from their starting points. However, it will take more time for additional teaching to help pupils to get closer to standards typical for their age.

All adults care deeply about pupils and forge close and caring working relationships with them. Pupils say that adults look after them well. Parents and carers wholeheartedly agree. Pupils are valuable ambassadors for the school. They are friendly, welcoming and well mannered. Pupils are happy at school and are keen to learn. Therefore, they listen carefully to adults and settle to work with the minimum of fuss.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school. A parent who echoed the views of many commented: 'Blakeney Primary School is what a school should be... staff are always there if we have concerns.'

The last inspection recommended that governors should check how well different groups of pupils are doing. Governors review your assessment information and undertake focused visits to the school. This enables them to meet with leaders and review teaching. However, they do not have an accurate grasp of pupils' progress. This is due to the limitations of your assessment system, which does not enable you to evaluate pupils' progress with precision. This means that leaders and governors are restricted in the extent to which they can ensure that teaching challenges pupils to make the best progress they are capable of.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Pupils' well-being is paramount to all that you do and, as a result, there is a well-developed culture of safeguarding at the school. You provide staff with updates to safeguarding training. As a result, they are aware that they are responsible for keeping pupils safe. Adults know the signs that might indicate a pupil is at risk and can consistently describe how to refer concerns. You maintain detailed safeguarding records and make timely referrals to external agencies, when necessary. You routinely check the impact of your actions to ensure that they are making a difference.

You undertake the necessary checks to ensure that all adults working in the school are safe to work with children. You meticulously record these details on the school's single central record. Staff are well trained to keep pupils safe in a range of situations, such as in the event of an emergency, or if they have medical needs.

You work closely with parents to explain the importance of regular attendance. This is having a positive impact, and attendance is improving. However, despite your efforts, a few pupils are frequently absent. Sometimes this is for unavoidable reasons. This limits the progress they are able to make.

## Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I wanted to determine what actions leaders have taken to improve the teaching of phonics, writing and mathematics at key stage 1 and writing at key stage 2. This is because, in the past, pupils have not achieved consistently well in these subjects. You have taken appropriate action to ensure that teachers routinely provide extended phonics sessions. These enable pupils to practise and consolidate their skills in phonics. As a result, pupils use their developing understanding of phonics to read accurately. Consistently good teaching has led to a considerable increase in the proportion of pupils who achieve expected standards in the Year 1 phonics check.
- You provide English and mathematics subject leaders with appropriate training. This helps them to support teachers to improve teaching. For example, teachers now more consistently embed grammar, punctuation and spelling teaching in literacy lessons. As a result, pupils are consolidating and applying these skills to improve their writing. Pupils are well supported to develop their vocabulary. For instance, Year 6 pupils use dictionaries to good effect to locate the meanings of words and confidently explain their understanding of synonyms and antonyms.
- Teachers consistently provide opportunities for pupils to develop their mental mathematics skills in order to improve their recall of mathematics facts. This is improving pupils' fluency in mathematics. Good teaching ensures that pupils develop the ability to apply their skills in mathematics to reason and solve problems. Considerable improvements to the teaching of mathematics and writing led to a marked increase in the proportion of pupils who achieved well in writing at the end of each key stage last year.
- Current pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers usually intervene appropriately in pupils' learning. This allows them to ask relevant questions to assess pupils' understanding and clarify misconceptions. Teachers' effective questions prompt pupils to explain their thinking, and this helps teachers to move pupils' learning on. Leaders and governors routinely review the effectiveness of teaching. However, your assessment systems do not enable you to evaluate pupils' progress with sufficient precision. This limits how well you can assure yourselves that teaching consistently enables pupils to make the best progress that they are capable of.
- I wanted to check how well additional support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities helps them to catch up. This is because, in the past, these pupils have not routinely made strong progress. Many pupils have multiple and complex needs which create barriers to their learning and restrict how well pupils achieve. Your special educational needs coordinator uses her in-depth knowledge of pupils to support teachers well. As a result, you provide pupils with extra help which is precisely focused on meeting their academic, social and emotional needs. Teaching assistants and teachers model learning effectively, which helps pupils understand what to do. Adults guide pupils well and help them to focus on their learning. This has a positive effect on pupils' confidence and readiness to learn. The special educational needs coordinator shared several examples of the striking impact tailored provision has

had on pupils' academic progress. However, other pupils also require ongoing, sharply focused support to help them to catch up from their low starting points. In addition, a few of these pupils are unavoidably absent, which restricts how well they are able to benefit from your provision.

- I was keen to gain parents' views of the effectiveness of your communication with them. This is because some statutory information was missing from the website. You have taken immediate action to remedy this. Governors acknowledge that they should have fulfilled their duty to check that the website was up to date. The overwhelming majority of parents who shared their views confirm that communication from the school is effective.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they refine their systems for checking pupils' progress, so that they can ensure that teaching enables pupils to make the best progress they are capable of
- well-planned pastoral and academic support continues to improve the progress and attendance of pupils who are frequently absent.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Beeks  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I had several meetings with you. I also met with the special educational needs coordinator, the English subject leader and the mathematics subject leader. I held a meeting with the chair and vice-chair of governors. I also met with the local authority adviser. I checked the school's single central record and we discussed your safeguarding procedures. I reviewed the school's self-evaluation and development priorities. We discussed the school's latest assessment information. Together we observed pupils' learning in all classes. I heard three pupils read. I spoke with pupils in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime to gain their views of the school. I talked to parents at the beginning of the school day and considered 23 responses to Ofsted's online survey Parent View, along with 15 additional free-text comments. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff or to the online pupil survey.