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Mrs Lynne Kilford
Headteacher
Bishop Pursglove CofE (A) Primary School
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Dear Mrs Kilford

Short inspection of Bishop Pursglove CofE (A) Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 2019, 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your staff and governors are aspirational for pupils at the school to do well. Leaders, including governors, know the school well. You use your clear understanding of the strengths of the school and your analysis of its relative weaknesses to plan carefully for future improvements.

Leaders noticed that pupils were not making strong enough progress in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. They responded swiftly to this and a new approach to the teaching of mathematics has been implemented to ensure that pupils build on previous knowledge and have more opportunities to explain their understanding of the concepts that are taught. In lessons, teachers use their strong subject knowledge to explain concepts clearly to pupils and encourage them to explain their thinking when they answer questions. Pupils' books showed that teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to write at length across a range of subjects.

Leaders have also reviewed the school's curriculum. They have ensured that teachers plan to teach the full breadth of the national curriculum, but they recognise that the curriculum is still under development. Nevertheless, the work that has already been undertaken has brought some success. For example, teachers now make stronger links between learning in subjects such as history and geography and pupils' writing in English lessons.

Pupils achieve well. In 2018, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected

standard, and the proportion achieving the higher standard, in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national average. In addition, pupils' rates of progress in writing and mathematics rose so that, as in reading, they are now in line with the national average.

At the time of the last inspection, leaders were asked to ensure that subject leaders were involved in training staff and improving the quality of teaching to ensure that learning activities stretch pupils' understanding, and to improve the outdoor learning area used by the Reception class. Finally, you were asked to provide opportunities to broaden pupils' understanding of a range of cultures and religions.

Since that time, leaders of English and mathematics have benefited from training provided by the diocese school improvement service. These leaders have implemented improvements to the teaching of mathematics and spelling, providing teachers with training and support to implement the new strategies. They have undertaken some monitoring activities. As we visited the classes to see the learning that was taking place, pupils were being appropriately challenged, particularly in mathematics, as teachers posed questions and activities that required pupils to think deeply and explain their answers.

Leaders have been outward looking in their development of the early years outdoor environment. The environment provides a range of opportunities for pupils to develop the characteristics of effective learning and to practise skills such as writing, outdoors.

Leaders have provided pupils with a variety of opportunities to learn about a range of religions and cultures. Visits to different places of worship in Manchester and Derby are supplemented by visitors coming into school who talk to pupils about their beliefs and traditions. During my discussions with pupils, they spoke knowledgeably and respectfully about religions and cultures that may be different from their own.

Your school's motto, 'reach higher, think deeper, love wider' is well understood by pupils. In lessons, they engage well with their learning. They told me that they like school. They say learning is fun and they appreciate that as this is a small school everyone knows each other. They told me that people are kind and helpful. Older pupils enjoy the range of opportunities that leaders provide for them to take responsibility by helping younger pupils and acting as table monitors at lunchtime, for example.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders ensure that all the appropriate vetting checks take place before a member of staff or volunteer starts working at the school. Staff receive up-to-date training. They know how to report a concern about a child's welfare, should one arise. Leaders make certain that records are well kept and referrals to external agencies are made if this is appropriate. The chair of the governing body meets

regularly with the designated senior leader for safeguarding to check that safeguarding arrangements are fully implemented.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. They are taught how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations such as when they cross a road or when they use the internet. Leaders arrange for visitors, such as the police and National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, to speak with pupils about important aspects of personal safety.

Pupils say that bullying is very rare at Bishop Pursglove. They were confident that if it ever did occur an adult would deal with it successfully for them. Every parent who expressed a view agreed that their child is well cared for and feels safe at school.

Inspection findings

- Although there were significant improvements in attainment and progress in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 in 2018, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected and higher standards in spelling, punctuation and grammar have been below average for two years. Leaders have introduced a new approach to teaching spelling across the school. Spelling is taught regularly in lessons and teachers encourage pupils to use the skills they have learned when they are writing. Teachers ensure that they teach aspects of grammar and punctuation that are at the correct level for pupils. However, pupils' books showed that teachers do not plan the progression of learning of punctuation and grammar carefully enough. Too often, pupils undertake isolated exercises with no opportunity to practise and embed the skills they have learned. Leaders do not have a clear enough strategic overview of the school's approach to teaching these important aspects of English.
- Last year, leaders introduced a new approach to planning the curriculum through a 'creative curriculum' of topics designed to engage pupils' interests. This has already had some success. Teachers plan writing opportunities in English lessons that link with learning in other subjects so that learning makes sense for pupils. Pupils say they enjoy the topics they study. Leaders are still refining the curriculum. At this stage they have not considered the content that pupils should learn in all subjects in detail. For example, although it has been defined that pupils should study 'mountains' in geography, there is no clear view of exactly what pupils should learn about mountains.
- At the start of this school year, leaders improved the arrangements for teaching phonics (letters and the sounds they represent). This is because they recognised that while all pupils have achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 2 in the last two years, too few have achieved the equivalent milestone by the end of Year 1. Phonics is now taught daily and the groups are now more logically organised so that the skills that pupils learn can be developed further in class. During our tour of the school, we saw that phonics is taught well. However, occasionally teachers do not ensure that pupils understand the meaning of the words they are reading. Leaders have undertaken some monitoring of the new arrangements for teaching phonics. The early signs are promising, but it is too soon to be certain that the arrangements

are fully embedded or proving to be successful, particularly for Year 1 pupils.

- Pupils' rates of attendance are in line with the national average. Over recent years there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school. Leaders check regularly pupils' rates of attendance. Pupils receive awards, such as certificates and book tokens, for good levels of attendance. Leaders have analysed carefully the reasons why a few pupils have had high rates of absence. They demonstrate compassion where there are genuine reasons for absence from school. Leaders speak with parents and take appropriate action if a pupil is not attending school as regularly as they should.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- embed the new approach to teaching phonics, ensuring that pupils make rapid progress and achieve the standards they should by the end of Year 1
- further develop the school's curriculum, ensuring that what pupils will learn is carefully planned and sequenced
- improve the school's approach to teaching punctuation and grammar, enabling pupils to reach the standards of which they are capable.

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

Yours sincerely

Di Mullan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher and three other members of staff. I met with four governors, including the chair, and held telephone conversations with representatives of the local authority and the Diocese of Derby.

Together, we toured the school to see the learning that was taking place in every classroom and we examined a range of pupils' books from across the school.

I spoke informally with pupils in class and more formally with a group of six pupils. I considered the views of parents through the 39 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school in the morning. There were no responses to the pupil or staff online surveys, but I

considered the responses to the school's own staff survey.

I examined a range of documentation, including the single central record and other safeguarding information; the school's self-evaluation and development plan; and a range of governors' minutes. I read reports written by advisers from the local authority and the Diocese of Derby, both of whom provide school improvement support to the school.