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Miss Sue Relph
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Relph

Short inspection of Brown Clee C of E Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 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 September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Since your appointment as headteacher in September 2016, you have successfully instilled a strong team ethic across the school. All staff are supportive of the changes you have introduced and all are highly committed to seeing the school continue to improve. All members of staff who completed their inspection questionnaire said that the school is well led and they are proud to work there.

You, your staff and the school's governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You have, as a team, successfully addressed weaknesses in the early years and in the teaching of reading and mathematics. These areas have improved considerably because you have sought out good practice in other schools and then applied it to Brown Clee. Your efforts to improve assessment practice are helping teachers and pupils to be clear about how their learning is progressing and where more help might be needed. Recent work to improve the curriculum is also beginning to have an impact. However, there is still more work to be done before pupils' development of knowledge is as strong in all subjects as it is in English and mathematics.

At the school's previous inspection, leaders were tasked with improving pupils' writing, increasing levels of challenge and encouraging teachers to share good practice. These areas have been addressed successfully. Pupils' writing has improved, expectations are high and staff routinely work together to plan pupils'

learning.

Pupils enjoy school. I spoke with many pupils during the inspection and all confirmed this fact. Attendance is higher than the average for primary schools. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are well motivated and keen to do well.

Parents hold the school in high regard and an increasing number are choosing to send their children to the school. The parents I spoke with at the start of the day were unanimous in their praise, as were those who wrote comments in Parent View. One parent summed up the views of many when they wrote: 'The school has gone from strength to strength. My children are very well taught, enthusiastic about their work and keen to rise to each and every new challenge.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Keeping pupils safe has a high profile in the school and all staff understand that it is their top priority. You and your governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Policies and procedures are clear and well understood. Staff have been well trained to spot the signs that pupils might need extra support. They pass on any concerns they have and these are dealt with speedily and appropriately.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for in school. All pupils with whom I spoke confirmed this. They told me that bullying is very rare indeed in school. They have great confidence in the school's adults to deal with bullying or any other problems that arise. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. Regular reminders in school ensure that pupils know about the potential risks and how to protect themselves from those risks.

All staff who responded to their inspection questionnaire, and almost all parents who responded to Parent View, said that pupils are safe in school.

Inspection findings

- The inspection's first focus area was on the teaching of reading throughout the school. In recent years, results of the Year 1 phonics screening check have been a little below the national average for primary schools. However, 2018 saw an improvement following your review of phonics teaching in Reception and key stage 1. Phonics is now well taught by a small, specialist, well-trained team of teachers.
- Reading is now well taught in all classes. Recent changes, including whole classes reading the same book, have proved successful. Classes read and discuss their book, and this is improving pupils' understanding of texts and their ability to analyse and infer meaning from those texts. Teachers' focus on broadening pupils' vocabulary is also beginning to yield results as pupils learn and understand new words. Teachers identify interesting words, discuss them with their class and display them on 'word walls' in the classroom.
- The second area of focus was on mathematics and, specifically, pupils'

development of basic skills in arithmetic. This is another area where all teachers have focused their efforts over the past year. Pupils' grasp of basic skills, including times tables, has improved considerably as a result.

- The teaching of mathematics more broadly has improved over the last two years. Teachers' expectations of both the quantity and quality of pupils' work are high. Teachers provide pupils with plenty of examples to consolidate their ability to apply mathematical methods. They also routinely expect pupils to think as they solve problems and then explain their reasoning. For example, I observed pupils who had been successfully calculating the areas of triangles. Their teacher then asked them to find as many triangles as they could with an area of 54cm^2 . Although this did not require any new mathematical knowledge, it forced pupils to apply what they already knew in a different context. This served to deepen their understanding of the concepts involved.
- The inspection's final focus area was on the school's curriculum. Staff have revised the curriculum over the past year. It now has a clear rationale, with the intent that it should be 'rich, inspiring, challenging and holistic'. Impact is already evident in pupils' increased engagement and interest in their learning. In English and mathematics, curriculum plans ensure that pupils' learning progresses logically and systematically as they move through the school. In some other subjects, for example science and physical education, learning also builds well from year-to-year. However, in other subjects, pupils' learning and knowledge do not always proceed as clearly and systematically from year-to-year. Consequently, content being studied does not always build on and develop what pupils have learned previously in that subject.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the curriculum in all subjects is as well planned and sequenced as it is in English and mathematics, so that pupils' learning and knowledge build logically and systematically as they move through the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, a representative of the local authority and three governors, including the chair of governors. I visited all classes with you, where we observed teaching and learning and spoke with pupils about their work. I talked with many pupils in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. I scrutinised several documents, including your school development plan, and records of safeguarding and child protection. I talked with several parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day. I considered the 22 responses to Parent View, including the 14 free-text comments and the seven responses from members of staff to the online inspection questionnaire.