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Mrs Julie Wright
Bedonwell Junior School
Bedonwell Road
Belvedere
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Dear Mrs Wright

Short inspection of Bedonwell Junior 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced a period of turbulence, with high staff turnover and a deterioration in pupils' progress. Following your appointment in January 2016, you and your team have worked effectively to improve outcomes for pupils and develop a culture of higher expectations. As a result, this school is once again a thriving learning community.

Working closely with the chief executive officer, you have created a senior leadership team that is highly committed and dynamic. Staff at all levels work successfully to improve outcomes for pupils. Senior and middle leaders analyse data forensically with the aim of ensuring that no pupil falls behind. Staff morale is high. The high-quality training and support they receive from leaders have resulted in improvements in their knowledge, skills and self-confidence. You have nurtured an open and honest culture, where staff are confident to take risks, embrace new initiatives and evaluate their own practice.

You are supported by a governing body that has full confidence in your strategies for securing further improvements in pupils' outcomes. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and continuously seek to improve their own practice.

Safeguarding is effective.

The safeguarding team has ensured that a culture of vigilance is instilled across the whole school community. The team works closely with the infant school to ensure effective support for the most vulnerable families. Early help, both within school and in work with other agencies, ensures that many pupils and their families are supported quickly and effectively. Safeguarding leads have excellent knowledge of the local context and direct families to appropriate support services. Staff have built positive and trusting relationships with families, which result in helping pupils as early as possible. Outreach work, provided by the school, offers support to families during school holidays.

All staff are trained appropriately and know how to recognise and report concerns. Governors have excellent knowledge of safeguarding, have received training, and offer support and challenge. The single central record meets statutory requirements.

Pupils' behaviour, both in and out of the classroom, is excellent. Pupils stated that they feel safe and they know who to speak to if they have a concern. They value the reflection room, which is a quiet space where they can spend breaktimes and receive emotional support from specialist staff. The recruitment of Year 6 pupils as playground 'buddies' ensures that no child feels lonely at playtimes. Incidents of bullying are rare.

The majority of parents who completed the Parent View survey told us that they would recommend the school to others and say that their children are safe.

Inspection findings

- Alongside evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, we agreed that I would focus on three key lines of enquiry. The lines of enquiry were based on the areas for improvement identified by the achievement information for 2017/18 and the school's self-evaluation.
- We considered the impact of leaders' work on improving pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment has been consistently above average for pupils achieving the expected and higher standards at the end of key stage 2. However, progress was well below average for disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, for middle prior attainers in reading, and for all pupils in writing.
- You and your team have made important changes to the teaching of these subjects, with a focus on developing pupils' confidence in tackling more demanding subject matter and activities. Teachers now routinely provide activities which enable pupils to deepen their thinking. Pupils are ready to challenge themselves and persevere independently with the tasks teachers set, even when they find them hard. In part, this is because pupils know how well they are doing and what they can do to improve.
- At the same time, you have provided teachers with well-focused training both to

strengthen their subject knowledge and ensure that they plan tasks which better meet pupils' needs. Leaders review pupils' progress regularly and are quick to identify any gaps in pupils' learning. Pupils who are not making as much progress as they could benefit from timely additional support to help them catch up.

- Leaders' work is having a positive impact on how well pupils learn. Teaching typically challenges pupils to aim high. A greater proportion of pupils are exceeding the standard expected for their age than previously. School information indicates that current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Visits to lessons and work in pupils' books confirm this view.
- Our second line of enquiry looked at the impact of middle leadership on raising standards across the school. You explained that this was a priority for the school.
- The development of middle leadership has ensured consistency in the planning and delivery of English and mathematics across all year groups. Middle leaders make a positive contribution to the school's ongoing self-evaluation, quality assurance of teaching, learning and assessment, and performance management of teaching staff. Through the support of the teaching school, middle leaders are encouraged to introduce new initiatives to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in these subjects has improved, and more pupils are working at a greater depth.
- You and your team have introduced a comprehensive programme of professional development for all leaders. Staff benefit from mentoring, coaching and nationally recognised leadership qualifications to improve their knowledge, skills and expertise. Training is shared effectively with all staff. Support staff are also encouraged to develop areas of specialism, for example with regards to special educational needs and mental health. As a result, you have created a culture of self-improvement and high aspirations for staff and pupils.
- School development plans show that leaders have made improving the curriculum a priority. Therefore, I considered the impact of this work for my final line of enquiry.
- As the improvement plan shows, leaders are ambitious for pupils' attainment in all subjects. To achieve this aim, leaders have developed clear expectations for the progression in pupils' knowledge and skills in each subject from the early years to Year 6. You have drawn effectively on partnerships with other schools within the trust to support this work. For instance, teachers benefit from many opportunities to share and learn from effective teaching practice.
- Although this work is at an early stage, it has had a clear impact on the quality of pupils' learning across the curriculum. Pupils are challenged and enthusiastic about their learning in different subjects, such as science and history. Teaching also provides pupils with effective opportunities to practise and deepen their reading and writing skills, for example through reading historical stories and writing about fossils in science. Nevertheless, the changes made are not fully embedded. More work is needed before the quality of pupils' learning across the curriculum matches that found in reading, writing and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils make the same good progress in all subjects as they do in reading, writing and mathematics.
- disadvantaged pupils make expected or better progress from their starting points.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bexley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Angela Tempany
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the chief executive officer, members of your senior leadership team, heads of year, the leading practitioner, newly qualified teachers, members of the governing body and the chair of Ignis multi-academy trust. I also had a telephone conversation with the school improvement adviser. I spoke with many pupils informally during lessons and met three Year 4 and three Year 6 pupils to discuss their work and hear them read. I also spoke with three lunchtime supervisors about safeguarding and training. I carried out a number of observations of teaching and learning and learning walks jointly with you across all year groups. Work scrutiny of pupils' books was carried out jointly with senior leaders. I carried out a work scrutiny of English and maths books to look at pupils' progress. I looked at documentation about: the progress made by different groups of pupils; behaviour, attendance, exclusions; external audits of safeguarding; the use of pupil premium funding; and the school's self-evaluation and learning improvement plan. I also checked the school's single central record, and policies and procedures for safeguarding. I considered the 74 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and the 32 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.