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Vicky Campos
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Dear Mrs Campos

Short inspection of Boxmoor Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 February 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 April 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

The school is welcoming and inclusive. Pupils are highly enthusiastic about their school. They are proud of their achievements and enjoy the range of activities on offer through the curriculum. They also enjoy the extra-curricular opportunities that deepen their understanding of the world around them.

Pupils are courteous, respectful and supportive towards each other and towards the adults who work with them. They are keen to do their best in lessons, paying close attention to instructions and working independently on a range of tasks. In our discussions, pupils were confident and articulate, demonstrating high aspirations for their future lives. They are eager to share their positive experiences of their time in school with visitors.

Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school. In their responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, many of them commented about the careful consideration given to pupils' individual needs with 'dedicated staff at all levels'. They said that teachers are very approachable and responsive in dealing with concerns. Parents value the inclusive ethos of the school, which enables their children to grow in confidence and to take pride in their learning. In their feedback to Ofsted, they spoke about 'a wonderful community' and 'a fabulously good school'. One parent said that the additional support provided had been 'fantastic'. The

overwhelming majority of parents would recommend the school to others.

You and your team provide strong leadership. You are highly committed to raising standards through effective teaching. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and challenge them to do their best. Pupils' well-being is a high priority and this is clearly evident in pupils' confidence and the happy school environment.

Your leadership team is highly dedicated to improving standards. Working together, you identify and implement the best strategies and resources to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum throughout the school. The whole team is fully involved in all decision-making processes linked to school improvement. Consequently, they are effective and thoughtful practitioners, who collaborate closely to secure continuously improving outcomes for pupils.

The school has made good progress in dealing with the findings from the previous inspection, particularly in raising the attainment of the most able pupils. I saw evidence that the most able receive an appropriate level of challenge; this was most notable in early years and elsewhere in the teaching of English and mathematics.

Published assessment information, from national tests at the end of key stage 2, continues to show that progress has improved overall for reading and mathematics. However, boys and disadvantaged pupils do not do as well as others. You are aware of this and now monitor learning more thoroughly. Teachers use carefully chosen teaching approaches, including drama, to make sure that the boys and disadvantaged pupils make progress more rapidly, especially in writing.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is considerably better than the national average. The school has secure systems in place for checking on pupils' absence. You carry out regular analysis of attendance trends, set targets and, when necessary, hold meetings with parents. As a result, the rate of attendance for disadvantaged pupils is rising, and the proportion of pupils who miss school frequently is diminishing.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team have ensured that all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities through the provision of relevant training and regular updates from the local authority. As a result, staff are highly vigilant. The recording of safeguarding concerns is precise and detailed and the liaison between the school and local authority, where appropriate, is prompt and effective.

Recruitment processes are secure, and all legal requirements are met. An administrative error identified on the single central record was immediately corrected during the inspection. A recent check by the local authority also identified some minor issues around the administration of this record. The required changes have been made.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. Both parents and pupils stated that bullying

is not commonplace and that the school responds sensitively to any problems should they arise. Pupils have a strong understanding of the ways in which they can be good citizens, such as being respectful to others, showing tolerance to those of different faiths and cultures and following rules responsibly. Pupils also appreciate the democratic process by which they are elected to leadership roles. These include places on the school council and acting as 'eco leaders' who take great pride in looking after the school environment and in encouraging their peers to be environmentally friendly.

Inspection findings

- A number of key lines of enquiry were explored in this inspection. The first of these was related to teaching, learning and assessment and the ways in which the school is improving pupils' outcomes. Published assessment information for pupils at the end of key stage 2 indicates that they attain well, but progress, particularly for boys and disadvantaged pupils, has not been so strong.
- In our visits to lessons, we saw that teachers are focusing on ensuring that their expectations of what their pupils can achieve are high and that suitably challenging work is set. This includes expectations of pupils to engage with complex and varied texts and to select resources that enable them to complete a specific task independently.
- My second line of enquiry related to the school's provision for the very small number of disadvantaged pupils. The attainment gap between these pupils and other pupils in the school and their peers nationally is diminishing as a result of leaders' actions. However, their progress is not as strong.
- You keep very detailed records of the checks you make on learning for your disadvantaged pupils as well as those who are not disadvantaged. Leaders and staff check regularly to ensure that teachers' planning precisely focuses on supporting pupils' progress. This means that you and your staff have a strong understanding of pupils' individual needs and any difficulties they face. You use additional funding well to provide targeted intervention to increase the achievement of these pupils.
- I also looked at the way that the wider curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to write across a range of subject areas. This was because the previous inspection identified that the school should increase the progress of the most able in writing by ensuring that they write at depth in a wide range of styles for different audiences and practise their skills across subjects.
- In early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2, English and mathematics subject leaders have effectively increased the range of opportunities for high-quality extended writing across all subject areas.
- While there were some examples of opportunities in lessons for pupils to write at length, this was inconsistent across subject areas. Pupils are not always aware of the ways in which to improve their work. In some subjects, spellings were not corrected and these misconceptions were seen to continue in pupils' work. This work is therefore evolving and leaders have clearly identified the next steps in embedding this process.

- Leaders have also focused on ensuring that pupils have access to high-quality reading texts to encourage their exposure to a wide range of vocabulary and different styles of writing which can then be incorporated into pupils' own work. The use of a consistent approach to structuring writing was evident in English books, but is not as developed in other subject areas.
- Finally, I explored the steps that leaders had taken to reduce the low attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are proactive in promoting high attendance through a range of activities, including award systems and interactions with parents. The attendance of this group of pupils has improved considerably.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils have opportunities for high-quality extended writing across the full range of subjects in the curriculum and that all work is suitably challenging
- teachers implement the school's assessment policy, particularly for writing and spelling, consistently across all subject areas
- pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their work and that misconceptions are corrected promptly.

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

Yours sincerely

Rowena Simmons
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

This inspection was carried out by one inspector. The inspection activities included: meetings with curriculum subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and members of staff with responsibility for safeguarding and attendance. I carried out joint learning walks with senior leaders in all areas of the school, briefly visiting most classes. I viewed a range of pupils' books and listened to readers from Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

I was able to refer to a wide range of school documents that related to the self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, assessment information, special needs, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding records. I spoke to parents and pupils in the playground and met with the school council. I also took note of the 139 responses to Parent View and Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and pupils. I held discussions about the school's plans for improvement with you and your

leadership team. We discussed the aspects that formed the key lines of enquiry for this inspection. I also held a meeting with four governors.