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Miss Anne Cooper  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Cooper

### **Short inspection of Bell Farm Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 5 March 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 March 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Together with senior leaders and governors, you have led a successful, sustained drive to improve the school. The leadership team has a clear view of the strengths of the school and the areas that need to be tackled to bring about further improvements. You all share a clear vision to enable the school to be the best it can possibly be by enabling pupils to achieve the best possible outcomes and to become mature, caring individuals.

The school community understands and embraces the school's motto of 'Proud to Belong'. A strongly inclusive culture helps this large school to feel like a family where everyone is known, listened to and cared for. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent said: 'The school has a strong ethos of being Proud to Belong, and they motivate children to achieve their best in all areas of life.' Parents speak enthusiastically about the way that teachers, support staff and senior leaders all listen carefully to any concerns and sort out any issues promptly and decisively. Almost all the many parents who expressed a view said that they would recommend the school to others.

Pupils love coming to school. They behave well and have strongly positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy the lessons that teachers plan for them. Pupils feel challenged in their learning because staff have high expectations of what they can achieve. One pupil talked about how teachers would always provide work 'over the limit bar' if something was too easy. Teachers offer useful guidance to pupils to help

them learn from their mistakes and understand how to improve. Lessons capture pupils' interest and are often memorable because of teachers' imaginative planning. For example, pupils in Year 6 explained how they had learned about the structure of the heart by dissecting an animal's heart. This followed a lesson where they had studied diagrams of a heart, found out about how it worked, and learned the right vocabulary to describe its parts. Other pupils talked about exciting visits that they enjoyed, including to the Science Museum, the Natural History Museum in London and to Butser Ancient Farm.

Pupils achieve well in school. Teachers provide especially well for the most able pupils. This was an area that inspectors asked leaders to improve at the previous inspection. In recent years, at the end of key stages 1 and 2, the proportions of pupils who achieved the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been well above those seen nationally.

Children get off to a strong start in the early years. Teachers plan an exciting range of activities to help children secure the basic skills they need to be successful in school. In both the Nursery and the Reception class, children become independent, enthusiastic learners, indoors and out. Learning activities engage children's interest, spark their curiosity and challenge them to achieve well across all areas of learning. Staff are on the lookout for opportunities to help children practise and deepen their understanding of reading, writing and mathematics. This addressed another area identified for improvement at the previous inspection.

Morale among staff is high and all who answered the staff questionnaire agreed that they enjoy working at the school and are proud to be part of the staff team. Senior leaders ensure that staff have the right training and support to be able to carry out their work effectively. In particular, there is strong support to develop the leadership capacity of the school. The leadership team is always on the lookout for opportunities to equip staff with the skills to take up leadership responsibilities.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders and governors have established a strong culture that places the well-being of pupils at the heart of the school's work. All staff receive regular training so that they have a thorough understanding of how to look after pupils and to notice, report and record any concerns quickly and accurately. Senior leaders work well with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and families receive the right help to make sure that pupils remain safe.

Children learn how to stay safe from a young age. A boy in the nursery showed me how he could use scissors independently to cut a shape out of paper. He did this confidently because staff had taught him carefully. Pupils of all ages learn how to stay safe in a range of situations, including online. Learning in the woodland area of the school helps pupils understand how to recognise and avoid risks out of doors, for example when using tools and when around fires.

## Inspection findings

- I focused on three areas of the school's work during this inspection. The first was to consider how well the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, especially pupils of average ability. These pupils did not achieve as well as others at the end of key stage 2 in the last academic year. Senior leaders and governors have looked closely at the performance of this group of pupils. Teachers track their progress carefully in all year groups and intervene quickly if their progress starts to slow. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils of average ability are making better progress this year and are achieving well.
- The school's curriculum is strongly focused on reading, writing and mathematics and contains a wide range of interesting and exciting activities. Science has an important part to play, and pupils achieve well in this subject. However, the planning of the wider curriculum does not contain clear sequences of lessons that enable pupils to acquire subject-specific knowledge and skills securely. Lessons typically teach individual aspects of a topic without any clear connection to previous learning. This prevents pupils from making strong progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Second, I looked at leaders' use of the pupil premium funding to strengthen the progress of disadvantaged pupils. In 2018, these pupils made progress across key stage 2 in line with the national average. However, this was not enough to diminish the difference between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment in key stage 1 was also below that of other pupils both in the school and nationally.
- You and your leaders and governors understand the barriers that disadvantaged pupils face, and you have a well-informed strategy to use the additional funding to help overcome these. For example, you provide time for teachers to have detailed conversations with disadvantaged pupils about their learning. This helps teachers to understand areas where pupils are less confident and to provide work to help them improve.
- Governors have a thorough understanding of outcomes in the school. They have asked for detailed information about the how well different groups of disadvantaged pupils achieve. This shows that where there are no additional barriers to learning, such as special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are attaining well, sometimes outperforming their classmates. However, when these pupils have more complex needs, they achieve much less well than others in the school.
- Finally, I investigated how well you ensure that all pupils benefit from regular attendance at school. In 2017 and 2018, there was a rising tide of absence in the school, especially among disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- You have spared no effort to improve rates of attendance at school. Staff track individual pupils' attendance, and they take action as soon as there are any signs that a pupil is not attending as regularly as they should. You work hard to provide help and support to families where pupils' attendance is low, in order to

overcome barriers to getting their child to school. Where necessary, you enlist the help and support of external agencies.

- As a result of leaders' concerted efforts, attendance this year has increased sharply and is close to the national figure. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND has shown rapid improvement and is much closer to national figures.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they target pupil premium funding even more closely to the needs of specific pupils so that the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, including those with more complex needs, continues to improve
- the wider curriculum enables pupils to acquire subject-specific knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Bruce Waelend  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met regularly throughout the day with you, along with the deputy headteacher and the two assistant headteachers, to discuss a range of topics. These included outcomes for pupils, the curriculum and safeguarding. I also met senior leaders early on in the inspection to discuss their self-evaluation of the school. I had meetings with four middle leaders, and with three members of the governing body. I also had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. Together, we visited classes in all year groups, except Year 1, to observe teaching and learning. During these visits, we looked at pupils' work. I also looked at some pupils' work in detail to evaluate their progress and the quality of the school's curriculum. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including at playtime, and had a meeting with a group of 10 pupils representing Years 2 to 6. I considered two responses to the pupils' survey, 14 responses to the staff questionnaire and 187 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I spoke to several parents on the playground at the end of the day. I evaluated a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation documents, and development plans. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and checks, and spoke with several members of staff at various times during the school day in order to test out their understanding of safeguarding arrangements.