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Ms Kirsten McKechnie  
Headteacher  
Bentley New Village Primary School  
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Dear Ms McKechnie

### **Short inspection of Bentley New Village Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 May 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.

Bentley New Village Primary School is a place where pupils enjoy learning. The environment is attractive and well organised and reflects the wide range of opportunities that you provide for your pupils. You and your leadership team have been reflective and have identified what needs to be done to improve, acting with a sense of urgency to make those changes. You think carefully about when to introduce new strategies and how to make sure any improvements you have made remain in place. Regular checks on teaching and learning, along with training, sharing good practice, careful resourcing and precise actions, result in current pupils making good progress throughout the school.

The governing body provides effective support and challenge. They check the information you provide is accurate, visiting the school regularly to fulfil their roles. Leaders and governors share a real passion for the school and the community and are unrelenting in their ambition to provide pupils with an excellent education.

Pupils behave well. They move around the school sensibly and they are polite and courteous, holding open doors for one another. In classrooms, pupils persevere with tasks and remain focused throughout lessons. They are supportive of one another and are confident when contributing to class discussions.

Following your previous inspection, inspectors recommended that you draw pupils' attention to the importance of legible handwriting and careful presentation. Examples of pupils' work displayed around the school demonstrate that pupils now take more pride in their work. Work on display is set out well and there are examples of beautiful work around the school, particularly from the oldest pupils. However, the quality of handwriting in books is still inconsistent. Some older pupils produce excellent handwriting which is neat and legible. However, there are occasions when handwriting, particularly in key stage 1, is not developed well enough. Some pupils form letters incorrectly, do not position writing accurately on lines and do not form joins well enough for their age.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your staff place the safety and welfare of pupils as a priority. You have thorough procedures in place to ensure that all appropriate checks are made when recruiting new staff. Staff who are new to the school receive thorough induction training and this allows them to be vigilant from the day they arrive. You provide staff with regular updates throughout the year. As a result, staff are confident when talking about what to do should they have any concerns about pupils or their colleagues.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They know who to talk to should they have any concerns about their safety and they are confident that any problems they have will be resolved. Pupils say that behaviour in and around the school is good and that bullying is rare. You provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn about how to stay safe, including information about how they can stay safe online.

During the last inspection, leaders were asked to continue their drive to improve attendance by developing better partnerships with parents. Pupils' attendance has improved and is now closer to the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) remains below that of other pupils. However, the attendance of these groups is improving and differences compared with similar pupils nationally are reducing. There are clear procedures in place to ensure that families do not take holidays during term time. You have reviewed what the school does to encourage pupils to attend and introduced a range of different strategies including rewards. Your attendance manager is determined to raise attendance and is tenacious in her approach. You rightly place high emphasis on the importance of sustaining this focus.

### **Inspection findings**

- In this inspection, I wanted to find out what you have done to raise achievement in pupils' writing. This was an issue raised in the previous inspection. In 2018, proportions of pupils reaching the expected and higher standards in writing at the end of key stage 1 were below average and no pupils reached the higher standards. The majority of pupils are now making good progress this year in writing. However, some inconsistency remains in the level of challenge for pupils

of different abilities. Evidence in books shows that the most able pupils are not always stretched and could complete tasks that are more difficult. Pupils have a good range of opportunities to write for different purposes and there are good links to other areas of the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to write at length during English lessons, however, are limited in key stage 1. Pupils do not routinely build upon the writing they have done previously to produce well-structured pieces of writing. Leaders are aware of this and have plans in place to make further improvements.

- A focus for this inspection was around attainment and progress in reading, particularly at key stage 1. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading at the end of key stage 1 has been below average for the past few years. Leaders have reviewed the way that reading is taught and there are now daily opportunities for pupils to improve their comprehension skills. Teachers use the new approaches consistently and the English leader supports colleagues well to help them improve their practice. You identified that many pupils lack the vocabulary they need to improve their reading and writing further. The 'New Village 9' is being used to reinforce key vocabulary that the pupils can use to improve their understanding of language.
- When we watched reading lessons, we found that pupils had numerous opportunities to discuss their understanding of texts. Pupils were encouraged to justify their answers using evidence from what they had read or by relating their answers to their own life experiences. Leaders have reviewed what pupils read and now provide pupils with more challenging texts. Teaching assistants provide a good level of support and guide pupils well, asking questions that require them to think more deeply. Occasionally, the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. This means that that they are not able to complete tasks that are more complex.
- Published outcomes show that the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in the early years has been well below average over time. I wanted to check whether children make good progress from their starting points. There are well-established rules and routines in place, helping children to develop their independence and work collaboratively. Provision is well adapted to children's changing needs. The environment and high-quality resources are well organised, allowing children to access a broad curriculum. The outdoor area encourages children to take risks, effectively enhancing the learning that takes place within the classroom.
- Leaders have taken effective action to bring about improvement. The early years leader has an excellent understanding of children's needs. She uses her assessments well to plan relevant activities, to adapt the environment and to decide how adults need to support different groups of children. Children are well taught. As a result, most pupils make good progress from their starting points. Sometimes, however, independent activities are not planned well enough to meet the needs of all pupils. When I watched the most able children working independently, I found that some activities did not provide enough focus or challenge. The most able children spent too long carrying out tasks that were too easy and this limited the progress that they made.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's handwriting policy is taught consistently so that pupils form and join letters correctly
- overall attendance continues to improve, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, so that attendance reflects national averages
- teachers plan activities in reading and writing that provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils
- teachers provide more opportunities for pupils in key stage 1 to use their writing skills in extended pieces of writing
- teachers in the early years plan activities carefully so that the most able pupils are challenged.

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

Yours sincerely

Jaimie Holbrook  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met you and other senior leaders, members of the governing body, representatives from the local authority, the subject leaders for English, the designated safeguarding leader/inclusion manager and the attendance manager. There were six responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and five free-text comments. There were 31 responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for staff and three for pupils. We visited classes together in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, spoke with pupils around the school, and looked at samples of pupils' work. We viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and plans for further improvement. I considered a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding. I also viewed information on the school's website.