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Mrs Jane Woakes
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Woakes

Short inspection of Bewdley Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 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 May 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

Bewdley Primary School is a friendly place where all are welcomed and supported. Parents and carers say that their children are happy and feel safe in school. Pupils behave well throughout the school and adhere to the school rules of 'Ready, Respectful, Safe'. They are cheerful, respectful and polite. The school is well respected for the work it undertakes with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Nearly all parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that their children make good progress and are taught well in school. One parent echoed the view of many: 'Both my children are happy at the school, have grown in confidence and have progressed thanks to the wonderful staff.' All staff who responded to the Ofsted survey said that they are proud to be a member of the school.

You and other leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Together, you have evaluated the quality of education thoroughly. You have identified the correct priorities for improvement, based on a detailed analysis of how pupils have achieved in the past, as well as the needs of all pupils currently in the school. Leaders have tackled effectively the areas for improvement from the last inspection. You have developed an assessment system to track pupils' progress. Teachers' assessments are now reliable, and you carry out regular

meetings to check how well pupils are progressing. Pupils who have particular gaps in their learning are identified and given effective additional support and resources. As a result, they are able to consolidate their skills in writing and mathematics.

Although, there was a dip in progress in mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2017 and 2018, you have identified the reasons for this. The most able pupils in mathematics are now offered after-school clubs, individual and group sessions, which offer extra challenge. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to visit the high school to work with Year 7 pupils and staff. Current assessments and work in pupils' mathematics books show that pupils are building well on their prior attainment and making good progress.

Governors have a clear sense of purpose. They have a wide range of skills and expertise. Governors ask pertinent and challenging questions. They test out your assertions about the strengths and priorities of the school by visiting lessons, meeting with staff and talking to pupils. In this way, governors have a clear and accurate view of how well the school is doing.

The local authority has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. The dip in key stage 2 results was identified and meetings were held with leaders and governors to identify the reasons for this and the actions taken.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. You are the designated safeguarding lead. You work closely with the other inclusion and pastoral support managers to keep children safe by making referrals promptly and following up on any actions. You and your team are not afraid to escalate your concerns with external safeguarding teams when you believe children may be at risk.

Staff are aware of their responsibilities in terms of safeguarding. They know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. They receive regular training and updates, for example about national and local safeguarding advice and guidance.

Pupils told me that they feel entirely safe in school. They said that bullying occurs rarely and were confident that any issues would be addressed by staff. Pupils have received advice on how to stay safe online.

Inspection findings

- You have responded robustly to the decline in progress in mathematics. This includes adopting commercial schemes to support teachers' planning and delivery of lessons in mathematics. Leaders have implemented and supported these curriculum changes in a considered way. Teachers match learning activities to pupils' ability and give clear explanations so that pupils understand what to do. Staff have worked hard to ensure that pupils have a secure grasp of arithmetic and calculation methods. A range of mathematical resources have been

introduced which help pupils, especially the least able, to demonstrate mathematical concepts in practical ways. Our reviews of your latest assessment information and pupils' learning, including a scrutiny of workbooks, revealed that good teaching ensures that current pupils, including pupils in Years 2 and 6, make good progress in mathematics. The proportions of current pupils achieving the expected and high standards in mathematics are set to rise. Pupils are often asked to explain their thinking and justify their answers. Leaders have identified that the next step is to ensure that teaching consistently develops pupils' reasoning skills to explain and depict how they reach their answers.

- The progress pupils made in reading at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 dipped to below the national average, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. You therefore made reading provision a key priority in your school improvement plan. The implementation of actions in the plan has had an immediate impact on the reading culture across the school.
- Pupils really enjoy the raised profile of reading and the reward system when they achieve well. Leaders have introduced a whole-school approach to reading. As a result, it is clear how pupils are taught reading and their comprehension skills progress as they move through each class. Pupils have also been introduced to a reading programme which enables them to undertake quizzes about the books they have read. Pupils enjoy this approach and are also able to undertake activities at home. Their interest and stamina for reading have increased. The effective teaching of phonics from the early years onwards has resulted in the results of the Year 1 phonics check rising over the last three years, and this is now in line with the national average.
- Leaders' assessment information indicates that most pupils are making good progress. You ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive appropriately tailored support. As a result, many disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the school. Disadvantaged pupils with well-below-average starting points are not yet making sufficient progress in reading to enable them to close the attainment gap with other pupils.
- Since the last inspection, there have been some changes to leadership. More staff have been given responsibilities in order to share leadership more widely across the school. They are proactive, and middle leaders' views on the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils are accurate. You are continuing to enhance the skills of middle leaders to ensure that they further develop their areas of responsibility and ensure that teaching and learning are consistently of the highest quality and outcomes continue to improve. Several members of staff are undertaking national leadership programmes to underpin the further development of their skills. You also ensure that they have a range of opportunities, such as peer reviews with other schools and carrying out research.
- Persistent absence was above the national average in 2017/18. You have been effective in reducing the amount of absence in the school, and attendance is now broadly average. You intervene swiftly to tackle attendance issues. Pupils enjoy school, and the rewards for good attendance motivate most pupils to attend regularly. Behaviour in the school is good and there are clear expectations of behaviour. As a result, exclusions have been rare over the last two years.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders, at all levels, further develop their roles to ensure that teaching and learning are consistently of the highest quality and outcomes continue to improve
- teaching continues to promote the development of reasoning in mathematics
- well-planned interventions continue to help disadvantaged pupils to make strong progress, so that they narrow the attainment gap with other pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Somers
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and other leaders, five governors and a representative from the local authority. I observed pupils' learning in lessons and looked at examples of pupils' work. I met with a group of pupils and spoke with other pupils during lessons. I heard pupils read in key stage 2. I scrutinised a variety of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's development plan, the school's own evaluation of its performance and records of checks made on the suitability of staff to work with children. I took account of the 143 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also considered the 21 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.