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Mrs Lorraine Kenny  
Headteacher  
Bolney CofE Primary School  
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Bolney  
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West Sussex  
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Dear Mrs Kenny

### **Short inspection of Bolney CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 5 July 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 December 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since joining the school in January 2016, you have worked with staff, pupils and governors to develop a shared, clear, ambitious vision for the school. You and your leadership team are determined that everyone at Bolney CofE Primary School will understand and demonstrate, through their actions, the school's values of honesty, respect, resilience and love. As a result of this culture, pupils show exceptional care and respect for one another and are very proud of their school.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, particularly its ethos. 'This is a wonderful community school that has excellent, established values and a wholesome, positive attitude to my child's development and learning' is typical of the positive comments on Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.

One of your most significant actions has been to establish a more rigorous system of appraisal for staff. The achievement of all groups of pupils, including the few pupils who are disadvantaged or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is now analysed more closely. This has resulted in teachers' increased accountability for the progress of every pupil, ensuring that bespoke interventions are provided when needed. You lost no time in addressing the 2018 dip in pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 1. New initiatives in the teaching of writing, spelling, grammar and mathematics have led to substantial improvements in the progress and attainment of all current pupils.

You have worked closely with governors to increase their involvement in the school's self-evaluation, particularly their understanding of the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on pupils' achievement. As a result, governance has improved over time and governors now have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

At the last inspection, it was recommended that the leadership of all subjects was improved further, with more being asked of pupils across the wider curriculum. Further training for teachers and the sharing of expertise, within a group of local schools, are building leadership capacity. Subject leaders are clearer about the scope of their roles and becoming more confident in holding one another to account for improvement. More needs to be done, however, to strengthen monitoring systems and ensure that improvement plans have clear and measurable targets.

You have successfully developed many aspects of the wider curriculum, such as science, physical education and computing, but are aware that more needs to be done to stretch and challenge pupils in other foundation subjects.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is very effective. You have established safeguarding arrangements that are fit for purpose and which all staff understand and adhere to. Because you and your staff know pupils and their families so well, any changes are quickly noticed and followed up. Pupils feel safe and trust their teachers and other adults to help with any worries they may have. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Behaviour is good in lessons and on the playground.

Pupils' overall attendance is above the national average. Every absence is explored to ensure that pupils are safe. The recruitment and background checks on the suitability and qualifications of staff, governors, supply teachers and visitors are thorough. You make sure that staff and governors receive frequent safeguarding updates, in line with government guidance, and that all safeguarding policies are kept under regular review.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the beginning of this inspection, we agreed to look at how effective safeguarding is and how well pupils attend and behave. We also agreed to focus on how well pupils achieve in reading, writing and phonics in key stage 1, following the 2018 dip in attainment. The third focus was on leaders' effectiveness in addressing the relative weak progress in writing, compared to pupils' progress in reading and mathematics. Progress against the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection was also investigated.
- Following the 2018 dip in attainment at the end of key stage 1, you and other leaders identified some of the causes. Your successful actions to address these have led to a significant rise in pupils' outcomes. This year, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing, mathematics and phonics has returned

to its previous high standard. You introduced a change to the structure of key stage 1 so that greater attention could be given to the specific teaching and learning needs for each year group. Focus meetings, involving teaching assistants, teachers and the special educational needs coordinator, were introduced to share ideas about individual pupils' needs to move them on in their learning. These rigorous pupil progress meetings have ensured that bespoke support is in place quickly, when needed, and progress is strengthened.

- This year, outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check are well above those of previous years and higher than the 2018 national average. This reflects strong practice and the improvement to the organisation of groups which you have secured. Parents have appreciated the phonics workshops you have organised, so that they can effectively support their children at home.
- Children in Reception get off to a flying start and develop rapidly because teaching is highly effective. This has ensured that almost all children reach a good level of development and are well placed for good outcomes in key stage 1.
- Leaders' work to develop and improve teaching is effective. A larger proportion of current most-able pupils are on track to reach greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics than in 2018. The development of mathematics teaching has prioritised pupils' access to and use of equipment to help their understanding. It has also focused on the application of pupils' skills to reasoning and problem-solving. As a result, pupils are able to tackle more challenging problems in 'real life' situations and can explain their mathematical thinking well.
- Pupils' outcomes in writing have not been quite as strong as their attainment and progress in other subjects, in both key stage 1 and key stage 2. You have made this a priority for the school and outcomes are now rapidly improving. This is as a result of the effective approaches teachers are employing, such as the new initiatives for the teaching of spelling and grammar. Pupils have increased opportunities to write independently across the curriculum. They feel that writing is purposeful and fun. Teachers, as a result of the effective training and development they have received, now ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to be successful writers. Pupils talk confidently about what they need to improve further and are tenacious in editing their work until they meet their own, and their teachers', high expectations.
- Governance has improved significantly. Governors know the school well and are involved in devising and monitoring development planning. They use their visits to check on these developments. They have benefited from the training and guidance they have received from you on subject leadership, understanding the reporting on pupils' performance information and on the curriculum.
- At the last inspection, the school was asked to develop the role of subject leaders. This is developing well. You have modelled your expectations of how rigorous you expect their monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning to be. You rightly judge that there is more to do to develop their skills across a wider range of subjects. You also recognise that not all subject action plans set clear enough targets and that monitoring by subject leaders needs to be even more timely and thorough.

- Parents I spoke to and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire were overwhelmingly appreciative of the school's values and the care their children receive. Many commented on the school being at the heart of the community, with one parent describing it as being a 'reassuring, happy, inclusive and safe environment in which pupils thrive on a daily basis'.
- Across the school, careful and appropriate links are being made between subjects, developing cross-curricular literacy, numeracy and other skills. For instance, in Reception and Year 1, pupils were enthusiastically developing their design and technology and writing skills as they created their pirate ships. The school provides opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to gain rich, varied and exciting learning experiences. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their recent trip to Madame Tussauds, and Year 6 pupils spoke excitedly of their forthcoming production. You are not complacent, however, and recognise that subject-specific skills, particularly in the foundation subjects, need further development.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- subject leaders strengthen their skills, raising standards through rigorous evaluation and action to improve the quality of teaching
- the curriculum is developed further so pupils develop subject-specific skills and knowledge in a rich variety of learning experiences.

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

Yours sincerely

Lynda Welham  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held discussions with you and subject leaders about your plans for improvement and evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I also met with members of the governing body and had a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority. I reviewed documentation, including: information about pupils' achievement; the school improvement plan; and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, in the playground and in lessons.

Together, we visited all classes. In classrooms, I observed teaching, looked at pupils' books and spoke to pupils about their learning. I met with nine pupils from

Year 2 to Year 6 to hear their views of the school. We scrutinised pupils' work in a selection of books from different year groups. I spoke with parents to gather their views at the start of the inspection and considered 32 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 13 free-text comments. I took account of 11 responses to the staff survey.