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Mrs Sara Harper
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Harper

Short inspection of Beechwood Primary School and Nursery

Following my visit to the school on 15 May 2018, 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 September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress and outcomes have improved rapidly. By the end of key stage 2, the majority of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make very strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

You and the staff have ensured that the school is a vibrant and welcoming learning environment. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and keen to discuss their learning. Those that I observed at playtimes and in lessons behaved in an exemplary manner. Pupils that I spoke to told me how much they enjoyed school. The older pupils talked about the many opportunities that they have to take on extra responsibilities. One of these is the opportunity to become a play leader. I observed older pupils leading games on the infant playground with care and patience. Pupils said that they really enjoyed the highly structured playtimes. They like the fact that there are so many activities to choose from and they enjoy participating in games with the staff.

One of the first things you did when you became headteacher in September 2016 was to introduce a new afternoon curriculum based on foundation subjects. Pupils benefit from a curriculum that is exciting and rich in opportunity. From looking at pupils' books together we could see that reading, writing and mathematical skills are well embedded across a range of subjects. I saw examples of how work in history and geography progresses pupils' skills. For example, in key stage 1 we saw examples of basic map work. As we moved into key stage 2 we saw examples of pupils applying their geographic skills to locate positions on maps using coordinates while identifying Ordnance Survey symbols. You value the work that pupils produce and displays celebrate their achievements around the school.

Pupils benefit from the support of skilled staff. You provide targeted nurture support to those who need it. The nurture support carefully balances the academic needs of pupils alongside social and emotional support.

Parents and carers hold the school in high regard. Those that I spoke to before school were overwhelmingly positive in their views; they were unanimous in stating that they could not find fault in the school. They felt that their children were safe, and that incidents of bullying and name-calling were very rare. Parents said that leaders and staff were approachable. One view typical of many said, 'This is a brilliant school with excellent happy staff. The headteacher is always out and about to welcome parents and children to school.' Those who responded to the Ofsted surveys were extremely positive in their views about the school.

Governors have a strong overview of the school and are accurate in their evaluation of the school's effectiveness. They have a firm understanding of the school's strengths and the areas to be developed. They are passionate for this school to live out its vision statement in enabling pupils to be the best they can be. Efficient structures ensure that governors carry out their responsibilities with high levels of rigour. Governors have an informed knowledge about the impact of the pupil premium fund and sports premium fund. Governors challenge and support you in equal measure.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have taken effective action to improve outcomes for pupils in writing. New systems are in place across the school that have reinvigorated the writing process. You place a high emphasis on teaching pupils to draft and edit their work. Nationally published data shows that by the end of key stage 2 pupils typically make better progress than all other pupils. Pupils in receipt of the pupil premium fund make progress that is well above average. Checks on the quality of writing are now commonplace. You have identified priorities and have tailored monitoring activities carefully to address weaknesses. Monitoring activities include observing in lessons, looking at pupils' books and speaking to pupils about their learning. When you became headteacher you identified that the quality of writing across the curriculum was limited. You addressed this quickly through the introduction of your new curriculum. The impact of these actions is not yet fully embedded in key stage 1. Although pupils are making good progress, more needs to be done to ensure that a greater proportion of pupils reach the higher standards by the end of key stage 1.

Safeguarding is effective.

As the designated safeguarding lead you have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Detailed checks are made on the suitability of adults to work in the school. All members of staff have received safeguarding basic awareness training and 'Prevent' training to enable them to spot potential signs of radicalisation. Several members of staff and governors are trained in safer recruitment.

You work closely with the local authority safeguarding team to ensure that staff training is kept up to date, ensuring that pupils remain safe. Close links with children's social care enable you to carefully monitor the high number of open cases in school. Together with your safeguarding team, you have created a vigilant culture in the school. Through the curriculum, pupils have opportunities to learn about the dangers of posting information online. They receive regular e-safety lessons through the curriculum. You have facilitated visits from children's charities and the police to speak to pupils and parents about aspects of staying safe.

Inspection findings

- You acknowledge that outcomes for pupils leaving key stage 1 have been low for the past two years. School development priorities have identified this as the key area for improvement this year. You have put robust plans in place to reverse this trend and improve outcomes for all groups of pupils leaving key stage 1. Since the introduction of your new curriculum, pupils now have daily opportunities to choose work at a level that suits their ability. In key stage 1, we looked at examples of pupils' writing. For example, we saw how pupils had accessed the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' at different levels and how they engaged in challenges that were closely matched to their ability. From looking in pupils' mathematics books, we could see clear evidence of challenge for the most able. Pupils have opportunities to apply reasoning skills to many practical situations.
- Performance information and evidence seen in books for pupils currently in key stage 1 show that the proportion of pupils working at the expected standard and those working at greater depth have rapidly improved in reading and mathematics. Investments in new reading resources enable pupils to have access to high-quality reading materials. The way you now approach the teaching of mathematics has had a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Pupils benefit from effective teacher questioning that supports and provides constant challenge. Established learning routines mean that pupils quickly get to work and little time is lost during lessons.
- The progress that pupils in key stage 1 are making in writing has also improved rapidly. However, the progress pupils make in writing falls below the progress that pupils are currently making in reading and mathematics. Together we agreed that the systems that you have put in place for the taught sequence of writing should continue to ensure that these improved outcomes are reflected in end of key stage 1 published data.

- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities receive a good level of support. Pupil performance information shows that the majority of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points. Where attainment is low, small steps of progress are carefully measured. You access bespoke support to help develop speech and language provision. You utilise specialist input from an educational psychologist, the autism support team and school health to ensure that pupils have the correct support to make good progress. Interventions are carefully monitored and reviewed termly.
- Another focus for the inspection was attendance. The overall school attendance figure has improved for four consecutive years and the previously high rates of persistent absences have rapidly decreased. The school attendance figure is now marginally less than the national average. You are relentless in the promotion of better attendance. Through employing a school attendance officer and gaining specialist support of an education welfare officer you now monitor absences more carefully while also working more closely with vulnerable families. Fixed penalty notices are routinely issued in line with the local authority guidelines for unauthorised absences. Each week, you celebrate good attendance in key stage assemblies. Attendance figures for all classes are displayed in the main entrance hall to foster a spirit of competitiveness between the pupils to achieve better attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders embed the changes to the teaching of writing in key stage 1 so that more pupils reach the higher standards in writing by the end of key stage 1.

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

Yours sincerely

John Donald
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and members of your senior leadership team. I spoke to several members of staff throughout the school day. I met with a representative from the local authority and four members of the governing body. I spoke to parents before school and I spoke to pupils in the classes that we visited and on the playground. Together we visited a number of classes in key stage 1 and key stage 2. We looked at pupils' books, observed teaching and learning and spoke to pupils about their work. I looked at a wide range of documentation including the school self-evaluation and school development plan. I scrutinised the school single

central record and viewed a number of documents in relation to safeguarding. I considered the 38 responses to the pupils' survey and the 35 responses to the staff survey. I considered the 14 responses I received via free text and the 29 responses to 'Parent View', Ofsted's online questionnaire.