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Mrs Sarah Meredith
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Dear Mrs Meredith

Short inspection of Bramcote CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 December 2016, 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Bramcote CofE Primary School is a purposeful learning environment where pupils learn and achieve well. You also ensure that the pupils' good progress in the curriculum subjects is not at the expense of developing their character. They are cared for by staff who take a genuine interest in their lives and, as a result, they become very well behaved, caring young people. Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school, and their attendance is above the national average and is rising further.

You give a clear sense of direction to your staff. They work in a cohesive, mutually supportive team to ensure that pupils receive consistently good teaching. The considerable number of staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire gave unanimously positive views on all aspects, saying that you lead and manage the school well. Like the pupils I met during my visit, they say that they are proud to be part of the school.

You know your school well. Your current evaluation document is a thoughtful and accurate assessment of its many strengths, and is based upon a wide range of evidence. Your school development plan addresses well, with comprehensive detail, the areas that you and your staff need to improve further. Your targets for pupils' outcomes are suitably ambitious.

You work well with the governing body who, while giving you and your staff strong support and acknowledgement for your hard work, are unafraid to challenge you if any aspects of provision need to be improved. Governors I met were confidently able to explain to me how they monitor, on a very regular basis, the outcomes for pupils, and particularly those groups of pupils who are disadvantaged, who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or who have circumstances which may make them vulnerable. They receive good information on the quality of teaching and outcomes in different subjects and they perform their strategic role very effectively.

Since the last inspection, you have appointed a new deputy headteacher, who has wasted no time in improving further the quality of teaching. After visiting classrooms to see teaching for himself, he trialled a new system of ensuring that pupils, under close guidance, learn to give themselves different levels of challenging work. This system proved to be effective, and it is now in place throughout the school, adjusted in different ways according to pupils' ages. Pupils I met during my visit explained to me how they like this system because it encourages them to choose work that is hard for them, and reveals easily what they are capable of.

Pupils' behaviour, identified as a strength of the school at the last inspection, continues to be excellent. Pupils listen intently to staff, following instructions very quickly and working hard. Staff greatly encourage them to give their views, thoughts and ideas. Pupils see that staff are kind and genuinely interested in them. As a result, pupils respond very well and become extremely thoughtful young people who are most polite to visitors, and to each other. They cooperate closely in class and do not distract each other from their work. Pupils also show respect for others whose culture or faith are different to their own. They think it is a very good thing that everyone is different because, as one explained to me, 'you can find out new things from them'.

At the last inspection, inspectors asked you to ensure that teachers shared their best practice in assessing pupils so that a consistent system of high quality was in place throughout the school. Teachers are using successfully, in all year groups, a revised policy for assessment and feedback, begun approximately a year ago. Assessments are checked for their accuracy either through moderation by the local authority or with other local schools.

Pupils are achieving good and improving outcomes. Published information shows that the overall progress of the Year 6 cohort at the end of 2015 was significantly lower than it was for other pupils nationally, due largely to the significantly low progress of these pupils in mathematics. This was because these pupils did not receive consistently effective teaching over time. As a result, the school did not meet floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. However, you have successfully attended to this matter. Your new deputy headteacher has strengthened the quality of mathematics teaching in the school, and the progress of pupils in mathematics, and overall, has subsequently risen. This year's results are greatly improved and are broadly in line with those achieved nationally once again. Information you gave to me shows that pupils are currently making good progress

across the school and attaining at least in line with, and in some cases considerably above, other pupils nationally. This was confirmed by a scrutiny of pupils' work that I undertook during my visit.

Outcomes in writing are currently a little lower than in other subjects. You agree that this is because, though your teachers are ensuring that pupils are quickly improving their grammar, style, structure and language when they write, they do not consistently point out to pupils when they have made errors in punctuation and spelling. Many of these errors are basic, such as not putting full stops at the end of a sentence, not ensuring that they use capital letters for their own name, or misspelling simple words. They stand in contrast to the often highly impressive vocabulary and striking creative skill that your pupils exhibit in their writing. Because teachers do not consistently check that pupils have corrected these errors, they continue to make them. As a result, their progress is not as rapid as it could be. You have already noted that the quality of teaching needs to be improved in this respect and you have drawn up plans to ensure that it is done quickly.

Disadvantaged pupils are making good and improving progress. During my visit, I looked at an extensive sample of work from this group of pupils, in different year groups. This showed that pupils overall are working at least at the expectations for their age, with a considerable number working at a greater depth. They are becoming increasingly fluent in their mathematical ability, with, for example, pupils in Year 4 understanding how to calculate one third of 18 and then, the following week, confidently showing why seven eighths must be greater than four fifths. Their mathematics workbooks show that pupils complete a good amount of work, with an appropriate emphasis on number and calculation. Disadvantaged pupils are also becoming more confident writers and are, overall, working at the level expected for their age. Their workbooks show that they are learning to identify and use grammatical features such as fronted adverbials, as well as deploying adventurous vocabulary, often to great effect. You are ensuring that the pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

It is not surprising that you, and the school, enjoy the strong support of parents. A very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, say that you lead the school well, and that their child makes good progress as a result of good teaching. Almost all parents say that their child is happy at Bramcote, and 92% would recommend the school to others. One parent summed up the views of many others by saying, 'I think the school strikes the right balance between academic achievement and social/personal/moral growth. Both of my children are very happy here and have progressed well.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Your staff understand fully their responsibility to report concerns of any safeguarding nature to you. All staff, and members of the governing body, receive safeguarding training, including in areas of recent national concern, such as raising awareness of the risks of extremism. Staff who I met during my visit were able to

describe clearly to me a wide range of indicators that could suggest that a child is being harmed. Staff also know the procedures for reporting this to you, or to the deputy designated safeguarding lead.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. New staff are recruited safely, and case files show that you make brisk and effective referrals to a wide range of external agencies, including social care, where this is needed. If you feel that the response you receive from those agencies is not good enough, you are unafraid to escalate your concerns to more senior levels.

Almost all parents who responded to either Parent View, or to the school's recent questionnaire, firmly believe that you and your staff keep their children safe in school. Pupils I met during my visit also confirmed that they feel safe, explaining to me how bullying and name-calling are very rare at Bramcote, and that a teacher will deal with it immediately if it ever happens.

Inspection findings

- You are ensuring that the quality of teaching is good and that it is continuing to improve. Teachers' good subject knowledge, and their skill in asking good questions of pupils, result in pupils learning well.
- The procedures for the appraisal of staff are effective. These are driving up the quality of teaching. Teachers receive good support to improve their skills and they attend training where appropriate. They are set challenging targets to improve their classroom performance. There is a clear expectation from governors that, where possible, every teacher's classroom performance will improve each year, and they are clear that they only grant salary increases in cases where these are justified.
- You have the strong support of staff. I received 17 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire during my visit. These contained nothing but positive views. As one staff member explained, 'I feel that the strong leadership, teaching and school ethos makes this an excellent school to work in, and be a child in.'
- Pupils' attendance was 96.8% last year, which was above the national average of 96%. It has improved further and is currently 98.8%. You work well with the very small number of families whose children do not attend as regularly as they could.
- Teachers plan work that it is interesting and fun for pupils. Curriculum topics are lively and engaging, and teachers begin these by asking pupils what they want to find out, as well as checking what they know already.
- Pupils explained to me how those pupils who need to catch up are given additional support, which helps them to improve. The most able pupils are given work that is particularly challenging.
- Teachers assess pupils well, checking that pupils remember what they have taught them. For example, in mathematics, they give pupils a concise 'exit test' several weeks after pupils have learned a new skill. If pupils are unable to show that they still understand what they were taught, teachers teach them quickly how to do it again. As a result, pupils learn new things securely.

- Outcomes for pupils are good in all key stages in the school. Over time, the proportion of pupils who achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is at least in line with the national average, and this year it is above it.
- Although the proportion of pupils who passed the phonics screening check fell in 2015 from the previous year, when all pupils passed, the results have risen again this year and are once again above the national average.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 was significantly above the national average from 2012 until 2015. This year, pupils again attained well. Provisional figures show that the proportions who met the expected standard, and of those who exceeded it, were above the national average in all subjects. Every pupil met the expected standard in science.
- Pupils in key stage 1 also make at least good progress. For example, the proportion of pupils whose ability was typical at the end of the Reception Year who then, this year, met the expected level at Year 2, was in the top 10% of all schools nationally.
- Historically, pupils' attainment has been broadly average by the time they leave the school. However, this attainment is rising. This year, the proportions of pupils who met the expected standard, and of those who exceeded it, were higher than the national average in all subjects. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in this cohort is too small for them to be reported on without the risk of identifying them.
- Pupils' progress, which fell significantly below the national average in 2015, has risen back to at least average national levels. For example, the progress made by the 2016 Year 6 cohort was in the upper 40% of all schools in mathematics, and in the top 25% in both reading and writing.
- Pupils in all year groups make good progress and achieve good outcomes. Information provided by you and workbooks from pupils that I examined during the inspection confirm this.
- Much of the writing that pupils do is of high quality in terms of its originality and creative flair. For instance, I noted how one Year 3 pupil had written, 'Mr Twit started eating, twisting the long, tomato-covered strings around his fork and shovelling them into his mouth.' Year 6 pupils were learning about Charles Dickens novels, writing descriptions such as, 'On an average day, Ebenezer Scrooge walked down the smog-filled streets of the city. With a nose as pointy as a dagger in the hand of a murderer, he didn't have a pleasant face.'
- Pupils I heard read during my visit were making good attempts to pronounce words that they were not familiar with. The most able pupils read with fluency, feeling and a high level of understanding. Most pupils told me how they enjoy reading books greatly, and do so as often as they can.
- Pupils are taught well about a wide range of dangers, such as from strangers and on roads, as well as how to protect themselves when using technology. Pupils I met explained to me that it was very important never to share their personal details when online, and to tell an adult quickly if they ever see an image or a message that worries them.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers consistently insist that pupils attend to their basic spelling and punctuation errors when they write.

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

Yours sincerely

Roary Pownall

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I shared my key lines of enquiry with you, which related to: whether the areas for improvement, identified at the last inspection, had been addressed effectively; the reason for the fall in pupils' progress in 2015 and whether the improved outcomes seen in Year 6 in 2016 are being reflected in other cohorts; whether disadvantaged pupils were making good or improving progress; the quality of mathematics teaching in the school; and the effectiveness of safeguarding.

I met with you and the deputy headteacher, who is also the mathematics subject leader. I met with representatives of the governing body. We visited classes in all key stages to observe teaching and learning. I looked at pupils' work across the school, including that from disadvantaged pupils. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and met with a group of them at breaktime. I considered the views of 39 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, along with comments they made on its free-text facility. In addition, I scrutinised responses from the school's most recent questionnaire to parents. I read a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, your school development plan and information on outcomes for pupils currently in the school. I visited the breakfast club, which is maintained by the governing body, to check that pupils were safe. I studied information related to attendance, saw anonymised examples of teachers' appraisal and examined safeguarding records and policies. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information. I looked at the range of views expressed by staff, through Ofsted's questionnaire, about the school and its leadership.