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29 July 2016

Mrs Julie Muncey
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Dear Mrs Muncey

Short inspection of Bengeo Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 June 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 February 2012.

This school continues to be good.

Since your appointment in January 2016, you have worked closely with governors and other school leaders to accurately evaluate the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. You have strengthened an effective team where senior and middle leaders play an important role in school improvement. With your guidance, this leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

In close partnership with your deputy headteacher, you use data to hold teachers to account for the progress their pupils make. This data is shared regularly with governors to inform them about the performance of the school and to support their effective monitoring and evaluation of the school improvement plan. Priorities in the plan are well chosen to drive forward further improvement. However, targets within the plan lack the necessary precision to ensure that improvements in pupils' outcomes can be accurately measured and support the evaluation of staff performance.

Your good leadership continues to develop the positive climate for learning noted at the last inspection. Relationships between staff and pupils and pupils themselves are extremely positive. Inspection evidence confirms that a strong partnership exists between parents and the school. Your senior leadership team sets high expectations of pupils and staff. All pupils are valued as individuals and those needing extra support are nurtured to succeed. Older pupils value what teachers do for them and

especially so in English and mathematics. They feel well prepared for the move to secondary school.

The pupils' very good attitudes towards learning and good behaviour are quickly established in the early years foundation stage and continue to develop throughout the school. Pupils have many opportunities to participate in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. The school has achieved much success in competitive sport at both a local and national level.

Records confirm that behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Any bullying and racist incidents are very rare and are dealt with quickly. Pupils say they feel safe in school because staff provide high levels of care and support for them. You have continued to ensure that the promotion of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development remains highly effective. The core British values of tolerance and respect are promoted effectively through well-planned assembly themes, lessons and the wider curriculum. Together with other senior leaders, you ensure that the pupils' cultural identity is celebrated alongside that of others from around the world. As a result, there is a strong sense of community and respect for all evident within this school.

Safeguarding is effective.

All statutory requirements for the safeguarding of pupils are met. School leaders and governors ensure that robust procedures for the safety and well-being of all pupils are followed through quickly. All staff and governors receive regular training in the latest safeguarding requirements and government guidance, including the 'Prevent' duty, to counter radicalisation.

Those senior leaders with specific responsibility for child protection work closely with staff from other agencies when any safeguarding concerns are identified. Records related to child protection and care are very detailed. The progress of the most vulnerable pupils is monitored very closely to ensure that their needs are fully met.

Inspection findings

- Senior leaders effectively monitor lessons and review pupils' books to ensure that recent staff training in the teaching of mathematics is reflected in a trend of improvement in pupils' outcomes. A review of the latest information related to pupil progress confirms that a previous decline has been effectively reversed. A trend of improvement is now evident at the end of key stage 2 and outcomes in mathematics are above those expected nationally.
- The effective teaching of mathematics, through practical learning experiences in the early years foundation stage, provides a good grounding for mathematical development in Year 1. Teachers in key stage 1 and key stage 2 make effective use of good information about the pupils' progress to plan lessons in mathematics. As a result, learning is closely matched to the needs of individual pupils. Pupils respond very well to a wide range of practical learning experiences

in mathematics. Marking and feedback supports pupils' progress in mathematics well. In the best examples, teachers provide pupils with more challenging tasks. This provides these pupils with an opportunity to master new mathematical skills. However, this is not the case in all classes, such as in Year 3, because sometimes pupils are not given the time to follow up their corrections.

- The quality of teaching and learning are good and more consistent than at the time of the last inspection. Elements of outstanding practice are becoming increasingly evident. This is especially so in mathematics lessons where, following some effective training, teachers plan practical tasks and problems to solve. This consolidates the pupils' ability to master new mathematical skills and concepts. Lessons in mathematics move along at a brisk pace and teachers make good use of resources to support their teaching. Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to write at length in other subjects, such as in science and history. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection.
- Detailed assessment information is used effectively to identify and monitor the progress of pupils in English and mathematics to eliminate gaps in achievement. This information is used well to target specific work for disadvantaged pupils in receipt of the pupil premium (government funding for those pupils eligible for free school meals). A review of the latest assessments made by teachers confirms that gaps in achievement for these pupils continue to diminish when compared to similar pupils nationally. A good range of practical activities and problem-solving opportunities provide good levels of challenge for the most able. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to effective levels of support and care.
- Teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception are of the highest quality. As a result, these children make consistently good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in a wide range of skills inside the classrooms and in the stimulating outdoor areas. For example, the most able children in Reception write simple sentences in a neat cursive style. They can draw large maps of an imaginary town. These maps include details of important features, such as a fire station and car park for toy fire engines, as part of their learning about 'People who help us'.
- Governors work in close partnership with the headteacher to monitor the school's work through a planned schedule of visits and activities. They are well trained, possess considerable expertise and are fully committed to the school's development for the benefit of the whole community.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- precise targets related to pupil outcomes are included within the school improvement plan to facilitate the accurate monitoring of performance.

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

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector reviewed a wide range of school documentation. The inspector jointly observed teaching and learning related to mathematics in all classes with the headteacher and deputy headteacher and held meetings with them. Further meetings were held with the chair of the governing body and three other governors, and a representative from the local authority. A thorough examination of the school's safeguarding arrangements was completed. Discussions were also held with a group of pupils from Year 6 about their work in mathematics and their time spent at school. The inspector met with a number of parents at the school gate. The inspector reviewed 155 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 71 free text messages. There were 29 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 129 responses to the online pupil survey.