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Mr Paul Bateman
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Bateman

Short inspection of Belmore Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 22 May 2018 with Beverley Perin, Ofsted Inspector, 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 July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Governors have created a culture of positive challenge which supports the senior team and holds it to account. Governors have a clear understanding of areas for development in the school and assist senior leaders in their drive for improvement.

Pupils are proud of their school and genuinely enjoy the experience of learning. There is an engaging and positive learning environment and the school celebrates the successes of all of its pupils. In mathematics, pupils are keen and enthusiastic problem-solvers who can articulate their ideas and explain their reasoning. This was shown by the very high attainment of Year 6 pupils in the 2017 national tests. Pupils' progress in reading and writing in 2017 was above average, although a lower proportion of pupils than found nationally attained the higher standard.

The inspection revealed some areas for improvement in leadership and management. In particular, all of the required information about the school was not readily available; and there have been some weaknesses in communication with parents in relation to the school's procedures at the start and end of the day.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders and governors understand their statutory responsibilities to keep children safe. All staff employment checks have been completed. Staff are alert to signs that pupils are at risk of harm and referrals to external agencies are appropriate and timely.

However in particular respects, your safeguarding actions remain 'work in progress'. You recognised the need to review safeguarding procedures and commissioned an external audit of policies and practice. The school has not yet had time to implement the recommendations from the audit with precision to ensure that all information held and systems to follow are clear. Some required information was not readily available at the time of the inspection. Additionally, the procedures for pupils' arrival and departure have not been clear, leading to confusion for some parents and pupils. Leaders have rightly taken action to address this and need to continue to communicate the procedures to parents.

Inspection findings

- Firstly, we investigated how the school has achieved such high standards in mathematics and what leaders are doing to sustain this. We focused on this because the test results in mathematics have been consistently above the national average for the last three years.
- We found that there are consistently high expectations of pupils in mathematics across all year groups. Pupils are routinely challenged with problems that link mathematics to real-life situations, so helping them to master the mathematical skill they are learning. Pupils' attention to detail in lessons means that their calculations are accurate and completed in a logical order. This allows them to easily correct any mistakes and achieve a deep understanding of the steps in a mathematical calculation. The strategies in place are used consistently by teachers across the school, suggesting that pupils' current high achievement is sustainable.
- We next explored what the school is doing to raise standards in reading, especially for boys and disadvantaged pupils. We did this because test results for Year 6 pupils in 2017 showed that these groups of pupils did not make as much progress as their peers. Additionally, pupils' progress in reading has been inconsistent over the last three years.
- We found that younger pupils read with growing fluency and confidence, using their phonics skills to tackle new and challenging words. Older pupils showed some capacity to 'read between the lines' and make inferences. However, you have identified that there needs to be a continuing focus on widening pupils' vocabulary and improving their comprehension skills.
- Leaders have a good grasp of the barriers facing disadvantaged pupils and have a clear strategy to improve their reading skills. Leaders use the pupil premium carefully and monitor and evaluate its impact. Initiatives include the use of an online reading tool that gives pupils access to a broad range of reading material; and 'book battles' which encourage pupils to give presentations on books they have read. Teachers have developed the choice of texts to meet the interests of all pupils; this has helped boys in particular to increase their curiosity in and enthusiasm for reading.
- We also investigated what the school is doing to raise standards in writing in key

stage 2, especially for those with higher starting points. The 2017, Year 6 teacher assessments showed that this group of pupils did not make as much progress as their peers.

- The school has adopted a range of strategies to improve pupils' progress in writing. Pupils are encouraged from the outset to write in sentences with accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. They are given a range of writing activities which are generally suitable for their prior attainment. They have regular opportunities to redraft their work on the basis of helpful guidance. There is a consistent approach to feedback in English lessons which helps pupils to identify and work on their next steps. However, this is not as effective in subjects across the curriculum and the most able pupils are not consistently challenged to reach the highest standards.
- Finally, we investigated whether the school is effective in improving pupils' attendance and reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent. We did this because the overall attendance of pupils is lower than the national average and an above-average proportion are persistently absent.
- Attendance information is analysed thoroughly and effectively and is used to put actions in place to support those pupils who are not attending regularly. Leaders also encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own attendance through competitions and rewards. These strategies are having an impact and, consequently, overall attendance is improving and persistent absenteeism is reducing. Even so, pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities have attendance levels below their peers. Leaders recognise that there is more work to be done to improve the attendance of this group of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers' expectations for pupils' writing are as high in subjects across the curriculum as they are in English; and that consistently high challenge is presented to the most able pupils
- the actions recommended in the external safeguarding review are implemented with precision and in a timely fashion
- communication with parents about the procedures for children's and pupils' arrival at and departure from school are clear.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hillingdon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Amy Jackson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you, the headteacher of the school, other senior leaders, teachers and staff. We also met with the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust. We scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, information on the attendance of current pupils, information on the use of the pupil premium and the register of the checks made on staff. We spoke to pupils and listened to them read. We visited lessons across the school and looked at pupils' work. We spoke to parents and evaluated the views of the 75 parents who completed Parent View and of the 39 staff who completed the staff questionnaire.