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Mr Tim Smith
Headteacher
The Beeches Primary School
Beech Avenue
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Dear Mr Smith

Short inspection of The Beeches Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 January 2018 with Bridgette Gough, 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

You, your staff and governors embrace the multicultural nature of the school, encompassing a vision of 'One School, One World, United'. The school is a welcoming place for all learners. The many new pupils who arrive throughout the year settle into school life quickly. Pupils are well cared for and happy, within a safe and nurturing environment. They conduct themselves well both in lessons and around the school. They are polite, respectful and take pride in their work. Most parents praise the work of the school.

You encourage your enthusiastic leadership team to continually improve their skills and reflect on the quality of education that the school provides for all groups of pupils. Together, you have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Since the previous inspection, staff have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, provide more opportunities for pupils to solve real-life mathematical problems and ensure that pupils gain a better understanding of what they read.

Governors demonstrate a strong sense of commitment to the school. They bring a range of skills and experiences to their roles. Collectively, leaders and governors provide clear direction to the school to secure further improvement.

You ensure that leaders are focused on meeting the needs of all groups of pupils. Disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and /or disabilities, new arrivals and those who are in the early stages of learning English are given well-considered activities to meet their social, behavioural and academic needs. Teachers throughout the school give clear verbal explanations so that all pupils understand what they are learning. Evidence from observations, teacher assessments and pupils' books show that most pupils are making at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their September starting points.

The progress pupils make from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6 in reading and writing is a strength of the school and is above the national average. However, you acknowledge that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 is too low. Increasing pupils' attainment is the main area of improvement on the school's development plan. Evidence indicates that pupils who start at the school in the early years and key stage 1 show higher attainment by the end of Year 6. The characteristics and the high mobility of pupils impact on the outcomes of statutory assessments for attainment.

Safeguarding is effective

School leaders, including the governing body, have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. All staff have completed up-to-date safeguarding training, including that for preventing extremism and radicalisation. Safeguarding in the school is everyone's priority. Staff have a good understanding of the issues affecting the school community and this helps them safeguard pupils' welfare effectively. Adults act swiftly when necessary and liaise well with other agencies to ensure that pupils in need receive timely and effective support.

Pupils learn about potential risks to their safety in a variety of situations. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are confident to speak to adults if they have any concerns. They know how to stay safe on the internet.

Attendance is checked regularly. The attendance officer and the family support worker help parents to improve their child's attendance. The number of children who are persistent absentees is declining. Unauthorised absence is not tolerated and, when required, fines are issued.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to investigate how leaders are improving teaching and learning in mathematics to halt the recent decline in pupils' standards. This was because in 2017, at the end of Year 6 and Year 2, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard declined and was well below national averages, including for disadvantaged pupils. Additionally in 2017, the progress Year 6 pupils made from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 declined significantly from 2016.

- You and your leaders were disappointed with these results and quickly introduced different teaching techniques and new resources. These are ensuring appropriate coverage of the mathematics curriculum and a greater consistency in teaching strategies to improve pupils' learning. The mathematics leader, who is a strong practitioner, is supporting staff effectively. The use of additional funding to form extra classes in each year group is supporting the learning of vulnerable pupils effectively, including those who are disadvantaged.
- The school's focus on developing reasoning skills is deepening pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts. Pupils can discuss which mathematical strategies they are using and why. Evidence from the school's assessment information and work in pupils' books indicates that pupils are making good progress from their September starting points. A greater proportion are working at age-related expectations and the higher standard across the school, especially in Years 2 and 6.
- My second line of enquiry looked at the school's provision for further improving pupils' attainment in reading and writing. This is because writing standards declined in 2017 at the end of key stages 1 and 2, and reading declined in Year 2. Even though the proportion of Y6 pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading doubled in 2017, all results are below the national averages.
- Teachers are focusing on comprehension, speaking and listening, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Combined with many opportunities to read and write across the curriculum, leaders are ensuring that pupils' skills in English are improving across the school. This is enabling more pupils to work at the expected and higher standards.
- I observed Year 6 pupils reading confidently with fluency and expression. Their books show that they are developing their skills of inference and deduction to help improve their understanding of more difficult texts. These pupils use a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures to improve their fiction and non-fiction writing. As with mathematics, the additional teaching classes are reducing underachievement for all groups effectively. A greater proportion of Year 6 and Year 2 pupils are working at the expected and higher standard in reading and writing.
- My third line of enquiry was to investigate the quality of provision in the early years. I wanted to see whether the improving standards in 2016 were maintained in 2017, and if pupils continued to make good progress from their various starting points.
- The proportion of children who achieve the expected standard of a good level of development at the end of the Reception year has improved continuously for three years, closing the gap with national figures. Evidence indicates that current Reception children are making good and better progress, often from low starting points.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that the provision in the early years is stimulating, well-resourced and meets welfare requirements. Children play and work well together, with effective support from trained adults. The teaching of phonics is effective, enabling the most able children to read, spell and write

difficult words. This work is supporting improvements in the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

There are many opportunities for children to develop their skills and knowledge through exciting activities that cover all areas of learning.

- My final focus was to investigate the capacity of leadership and management to improve teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes. You and your leaders have correctly identified the school's strengths and areas to develop. You are focusing on raising pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders' actions, alongside an accurate school self-evaluation, are driving the school forward. The effective implementation of new approaches in English and mathematics are improving teaching and learning.
- The school's assessment system clearly indicates pupils' attainment and progress across each year group in reading, writing and mathematics. Rigorous monitoring and accurate analysis of this assessment information, combined with robust pupil progress meetings, quickly identify where support is required for teachers and pupils. This rigorous monitoring informs the school's action plans and the impact of these actions are ensuring improvements in teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes. All groups of pupils are now making good progress from their various starting points. Evidence of this can be seen in pupils' work in books.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- consistently good and better teaching across the school enables a greater proportion of pupils to reach the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Harrison
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

- During the inspection, inspectors met with leaders and governors. I held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of pupils and informally with pupils around the school.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including information about the school's self-evaluation and plans for future improvement.

- Inspectors examined policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including the school's single central record of pre-employment checks on staff.
- Visits were made jointly with leaders to classrooms within the school to observe learning and scrutinise the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 62 staff members, 14 pupils and 14 parents who responded to Ofsted's online surveys. Parental views from the free-text service, parents spoken to during the inspection and the school's recent parental survey were also considered.