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Mrs Norton
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Norton

Short inspection of Bilton CofE Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 14 February 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since being appointed as headteacher in 2016, you have created a renewed sense of purpose among the school community. Your clear and determined leadership has galvanised staff, pupils and parents. A sense of teamwork pervades the school. You are ably supported by a capable senior leadership team. Governors and leaders know the school very well and are sharply focused on continuous improvement. In 2016, outcomes at the end of Year 6 were not as high as they should have been. Your response to improve outcomes in 2017 was swift and successful.

Pupils' excellent personal development is at the heartbeat of the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive. Staff model and teach values well. Consequently, pupils are caring and kind, and have inclusive views about the world. The 'no outsiders' curriculum enables pupils to talk maturely about accepting difference. Comments from pupils included: 'You should not discriminate against others for being different', and 'It does not matter if someone is white, black, gay, or if they are from a different culture, everybody has the right to be included.' You have also ensured that the school motto, 'I have the freedom and choice to be ambitious for my future' is well understood by pupils. They work hard and aim high. The Christian ethos in the school dovetails with wide-ranging work that you do to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

You have developed leaders' roles and responsibilities well. They feel empowered and trusted to lead. Subject leaders are proactive and lead successful whole-school improvements. They are given time to address priorities and put in place training for staff. For example, the school is working towards 'Science Mark', which has sparked improvements to the subject. An engineer visited the school and in a follow-up project, pupils used their knowledge to build their own model car. Opportunities such as this, and other science initiatives, are helping to develop staff's subject knowledge, and pupils' scientific skills.

The governing body is very effective. Led astutely by the chair, governors provide strong and supportive challenge. This is evident in minutes of meetings and on their visits into school. They scrutinised the use of funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and, as a result, funding is now being used more effectively.

You have responded effectively to the areas for improvement since the previous inspection. Staff have developed a good understanding of the demands of the new curriculum. Their subject knowledge is precise and they have high expectations of how much work pupils produce in lessons. Little time is lost in learning, so pupils progress well. Pupils regularly discuss their learning with their peers, using accurate subject-specific language when doing so. You have implemented a range of positive new teaching approaches in the last few years. Some of these strategies are still developing. Pupils make good progress, but sometimes they could be stretched even further. For example, occasionally some pupils continue to practise calculations that they have already mastered, rather than applying their skills to more complex problems. Leaders now need to focus on fully embedding approaches, so that attainment continues to rise in reading, writing and mathematics.

The work that you have done to improve communication with parents and carers has been successful. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of the education and the level of care that staff provide. You use social media and your bulletin to keep parents updated about news. You also ask parents' opinions through surveys and respond positively to their suggestions.

Leaders and staff work successfully on meeting individual pupils' needs. This is particularly the case for pupils who are vulnerable. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and pupils who have social or emotional needs, are well supported. You make good use of external specialist support to enhance the provision that you offer in school. Your own family support worker has strong partnerships with pupils and families who require additional support.

Pupils' eyes light up when they talk about the topics that they cover in the curriculum. You and the staff have worked hard to create meaningful topics that spark pupils' interests. Pupils were enthused about turning their classroom into a courtroom and doing drama in their 'crime and punishment' topic. Others spoke knowledgeably about the history they learned when dressing up as evacuees for a trip in their 'World War 2' topic. The rich curriculum ensures that pupils develop appropriate skills and understanding, across a range of subjects.

You have made sure that pupils receive a range of wider enrichment opportunities. Pupils enjoy after-school clubs, such as: fizz pop science; martial arts; football; street dance; and cooking. The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding has been used well to increase participation in extra-curricular clubs and competitive sports. You have also ensured that pupils' leadership skills are developed through additional responsibilities such as: the junior leadership team; online rangers; and house captains.

Safeguarding is effective.

The safeguarding procedures and the culture for keeping pupils safe are a significant strength of the school. Understandably, you are in a position to share your good practice. You lead an aspect of safeguarding within a local network of schools.

The designated leads for safeguarding are extremely thorough in their work. Record-keeping is meticulous and concerns raised about pupils are followed up tenaciously. External services are involved in a timely and appropriate manner. The school's family support worker also plays a significant role in supporting the welfare of pupils and families. High-quality training ensures that staff have a superb understanding about their responsibilities. For example, they are absolutely clear about how to recognise different forms of abuse and the risks associated with child sexual exploitation.

Your curriculum ensures that pupils are well equipped to keep themselves safe. They spoke confidently about key processes in school, such as the lock-down procedures and the fire drill. Pupils were also clear about how to keep safe online, particularly the importance of not giving out personal information on the internet. Pupils are taught how to recognise feelings of stress or worry. Comments from pupils included, 'If you are worried and you get a fuzzy or tight feeling, you can use the worries box and an adult will help you.'

Inspection findings

- At the end of Year 6 in 2016, pupils' attainment declined. You quickly identified that pupils were not developing the skills and understanding to meet the demands of the curriculum. Leaders and staff took decisive action and implemented a range of new strategies to improve learning in reading, writing, mathematics, and in wider curriculum subjects. For example, pupils are now provided with more opportunities to write at length, and in English, boys are more motivated by the choice of curriculum topics. You have also put in place occasional standardised tests, which have helped secure the accuracy of teachers' assessments.
- As a result of the wide-ranging strategies, pupils' attainment rose significantly in 2017 at the end of key stage 2. In other year groups, your assessment information demonstrates that pupils' high attainment is built upon as they move through school. However, some of the strategies are in the early days of

implementation and teachers are refining their delivery. Further work to fully embed the strategies will help to raise pupils' attainment even further.

- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is mixed. In some year groups they are doing well, but in others they are not catching up with other pupils quickly enough. Over the last two years, at the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils' attainment and progress has not been high enough, particularly in reading. In the early part of 2017, you carried out a review of pupil premium spending. In response to the review, you are now putting the funding to more effective use. The funding is being focused far more precisely on pupils' learning in reading, writing and mathematics. A new after-school club run by staff is helping pupils to receive additional high-quality support for their homework. There is also a new intervention for reading to support pupils who struggling to grasp key reading skills. The early indications show that these strategies are having a positive impact. For example, pupils' reading ages are accelerating after receiving additional support. However, several of these new focused strategies are in their early stages and now need embedding to see the long-term impact. You recognise that disadvantaged pupils' attainment is not high enough and needs to be a continual focus, particularly in reading.
- Pupils' behaviour is good across the school. They are respectful to one another and their conduct around school is exemplary. You have put in place thoughtful reward strategies, which motivate the pupils. They enjoy receiving 'leaf points' for their house team when they behave well or produce high-quality work. Equally, pupils are clear about what happens if behaviour falls below your expected standard. They are given a warning, and if their poor behaviour persists, they work with their teacher to log the incident online. These procedures have had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and incidents have reduced in the year.
- Fixed-term exclusions have been just above the national average for several years. You do not take decisions to exclude pupils lightly because it conflicts with the highly inclusive nature of your school. However, the fixed-term exclusions have been justified and necessary. There are some pupils in the school with complex behaviour needs. You manage these pupils well and use external services to put in place precise support strategies. Pupils who have social and emotional difficulties are also given additional nurture support through 'the burrow' provision. This has helped a number of pupils become more settled and in a better position to access learning in the classroom. Several pupils who have complex behaviour needs have improved their behaviour over time. You and the governors are going to continue to monitor the rates of fixed-term exclusions.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent strategies to improve reading, writing and mathematics are fully embedded, so that pupils' attainment continues to rise
- disadvantaged pupils' attainment rises, particularly for reading.

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

Yours sincerely

Matt Meekin
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your deputy headteacher and other leaders. I also met with three governors. I spoke to pupils informally and formally. I made short visits to seven lessons with you and looked at a range of pupils' books. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and considered 133 free-text responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also considered the responses from the online questionnaire completed by pupils and staff.

I scrutinised various documents including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan and the documents that you use to check the quality of teaching. You shared with me the most recent assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. We discussed the national test results and assessments undertaken by pupils in 2016 and 2017. I also looked at the school's published information on the website, as well as minutes of governing body meetings and information about attendance, behaviour and safety.