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Mr Steve Wigley
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Steve Wigley

Short inspection of Bellefield Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 10 January 2017, 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 March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. At the core of this effective school is the way that you and your senior leadership team work seamlessly together. You share the same goals and are fully committed to making sure that every pupil gets the best possible education. Teachers have high expectations of all the pupils and have a very deep understanding of their individual needs. Pupils receive a rich and varied curriculum which includes lots of opportunities for them to excel with their art work and learn about different countries and historical events. They behave very well and have a full understanding of the consistent routines and rules in and around school. You lead a very happy school where your staff enjoy working and your pupils love attending.

Parents who submitted comments on the online inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about your school. Their views can be summed up by one parent who explained that: 'Bellefield is a fantastic school. It has a very welcoming and inclusive atmosphere and there always seems to be so much going on.... The teachers are always knowledgeable, enthusiastic and could not be more approachable.'

At the time of the last inspection the school was asked to ensure that the activities teachers planned met the needs of all the pupils. During my visit it was very clear that all teachers plan lessons which interest and motivate all the pupils. Activities are tailor-made to extend the thinking of the most able and extra help skilfully

supports those pupils who find learning more of a challenge.

The last inspection report highlighted the need for teachers to improve the consistency of their feedback to pupils when they have completed their work. Pupils are now very clear about why their teachers make comments in their books. They are given time to respond to them and find the tips that they are given very helpful in guiding them through the next steps in their learning. This has supported them in making better progress in their learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The safe and nurturing culture is tangible and is an integral part of school life. As one parent explained, 'The school is a safe, happy environment.'

Recruitment and vetting procedures for all staff rigidly follow statutory guidance. All staff and governors receive regular and thorough safeguarding training. This ensures that they are very clear about what to do if they have any concerns, however small, about the pupils. The pastoral managers play an important role in liaising between home and school, particularly when there are issues relating to maintaining regular attendance. Leaders are quick to follow up any unusual absences, such as unplanned visits abroad for lengthy stays. The close working relationships with specialist agencies also contribute to the strong welfare and safety provided by the school.

Pupils report that they feel very safe in school and know that there is always an adult available who will help them sort out any worries or concerns. They know that the school internet system protects them well from any inappropriate websites or contacts and use their knowledge of internet safety wisely with personal laptops and tablets. Pupils are also fully aware of the potential dangers when using mobile phones.

Inspection findings

- An increasing proportion of children start your school with poorly developed speaking and social skills. This is because many have no prior knowledge of the English language. Others have not had rich opportunities to develop their vocabulary and social skills. Although children make good progress during their time in the early years, the proportion reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception is below average. You and your leadership team know that pupils continue to make good progress in Year 1. However, despite strong teaching and learning, their lack of vocabulary on entry into school continues to impact negatively on their confidence to use different sounds and letters. This, in turn, affects their ability to meet the expected levels in the Year 1 national phonics check.
- To rectify this gap in the pupils' vocabulary and help them reach expected levels in the phonics checks, you have introduced a more consistent approach to the

teaching of letters and sounds. Both teachers and teaching assistants have had additional training which is enabling them to skilfully use a wide range of interesting and fun approaches to teaching sounds. Activities are matched to meet the different needs of the pupils and individual help is given where appropriate. The introduction of a systematic tracking system which records pupils' individual progress in phonics is being used well to inform teachers' planning.

- The effective individual support for those disadvantaged pupils in Year 3, who had not met the expected phonics level when retested in Year 2, is enabling them to accelerate their progress in reading and develop a wider vocabulary. Many of these pupils also have additional learning needs and these are being supported well through a range of different specialist teaching sessions and individual help.
- You and your leadership team know that in the most recent national Year 6 mathematics tests, the most able girls did not do as well as they could have done. Following careful analysis of the results, you recognised that the girls needed to have greater confidence in using and applying their mathematical knowledge when solving fraction problems and to develop more stamina in test situations. Current most-able girls demonstrate a secure understanding of applying their mathematical skills to solve a range of problems. For example, they quickly grasped that they could calculate the missing size of different angles by using their arithmetic skills. An after-school club for the most able mathematicians is also promoting greater confidence in the pupils' ability to solve problems.
- Inspection findings confirm that you and your leadership team have a very clear understanding of pupils' outcomes and use the information to accurately inform school improvements. You keep the governors well informed and they are very supportive and involved in the life of the school. However, governors rely too heavily on the information you provide and this does not always enable them to challenge the work of the school independently.
- Despite being vigilant about attendance, you know that it was just below the national average last year. Although strongly discouraged by the school, some families choose to take extended holidays to visit their families overseas. You and your pastoral managers have gained some success in encouraging families to alter their travel plans to ensure that their children miss as little school as possible. You have also managed to help some families understand that they can send their children to school regardless of minor sniffles. However, you recognise that you have some way to go before this becomes the norm.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors have a better understanding and involvement in published information about pupils' outcomes so that they can independently challenge the work of the school

- they involve parents more in the benefits of regular attendance at school.

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

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your deputy headteacher, your assistant headteacher and a senior teacher. We talked about the improvements which had been made since the last inspection. I looked at all safeguarding records and explored your recruitment and vetting procedures. I also held discussions with three governors, including the chair of the governing body, and six senior and middle leaders. Together we visited phonics and mathematics lessons and carried out a 'learning walk' through the rest of the school. I heard three Year 3 pupils read and had a discussion with six Year 6 pupils. I looked at the 20 survey results from Parent View and considered the comments that had been submitted.

The key lines of enquiry tested on the short inspection day were:

- Why did a high proportion of pupils not achieve the expected phonics level at the end of Year 1 and what is the school doing to improve their phonics knowledge and skills?
- What is the school doing to improve the progress made by the most able girls in mathematics?
- How well are the disadvantaged pupils from last year's Year 2 class being currently supported?
- Does the school keep its pupils safe?