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Mr Chris Booth
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Booth

Short inspection of Bowling Green Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 March 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 April 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have created a very effective leadership team in the two years since becoming headteacher. Staff and pupils work well together in a calm and purposeful environment. Consequently, pupils are making good progress in their learning across a range of subjects. Parents are exceptionally pleased with the school's work with their children.

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to strengthen pupils' writing skills by providing more opportunities for them to write at length. I visited classrooms and analysed pupils' work and found that there is a wealth of opportunities for pupils to write extensively in English lessons and other subjects. You have given time to the leader of English to seek out best practice from other schools. As a result, she has provided good training for teachers and increased teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. Leaders check pupils' work well and are making sure that good writing is the norm across the school. Occasionally, spelling is not checked carefully by teachers and pupils to strengthen writing further.

You have recently introduced a new scheme for the teaching of early reading. I was keen to see the teaching of early reading as this was an additional area identified as requiring attention from the previous inspection. Teachers plan a range of interesting reading tasks in early years and in Year 1 to develop good reading skills. I noticed that teaching assistants were adept in supporting children's early reading

skills because of the good training they have received and teachers' very effective teamwork with their assistants. Occasionally, understanding of the sounds associated with letters is not checked well enough for the least able pupils to help them make swift progress. Overall, teachers and teaching assistants are using the new scheme well to help pupils make good progress in early reading.

Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress in mathematics has been strengthening to be consistently good by the end of key stage 2 in 2015. However, at the end of key stage 2 in 2016, progress in mathematics seemed to have slipped and was below average. I found that you and your new leader of mathematics had responded swiftly to this dip in progress. You rightly identified that mathematical reasoning and problem-solving needed strengthening. Your subject leader quickly designed resources and provided training for staff across the school to meet the requirements of the new mathematics curriculum. Pupils' work has improved quickly because staff have taken on the good advice and training from the subject leader. I found work was pitched well to meet pupils' needs. There is a good range of challenging tasks for pupils to solve and to think deeply about. It is clear that pupils are making good progress in mathematics. However, they are too dependent on adults checking that answers are right rather than employing a range of checking procedures for themselves.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your deputy headteacher have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are vigilant and are acutely aware that safeguarding is not just leadership's responsibility but their responsibility. Your deputy, the designated lead for safeguarding, keeps meticulous records that support children's safety effectively. Staff are informed appropriately of the needs of pupils and how they should be supported throughout the day. The school works closely with parents and external agencies in the local authority to ensure that children are kept safe. Should concerns be raised, the designated leader investigates thoroughly and puts early intervention plans in place to support children. All the parents responding to Parent View indicated that children were safe in school and well cared for.

Safeguarding training for staff and governors means they are knowledgeable and up to date with the most recent legislation. Governors receive appropriate reports about safeguarding and child protection at their regular meetings. The safeguarding governor is a skilled health professional and checks that procedures meet statutory requirements. The few staff contracted to the school one morning per week know the school's requirements for safeguarding. However, they are not clear about the recommended procedures for reporting allegations concerning colleagues, particularly if it were the headteacher.

Inspection findings

- You have an accurate view of the school. In a short period of time, you have created a dedicated leadership team that has strengthened the school's capacity

for further improvement. You have supported and coached new leaders, as has your deputy, and provided good professional development for leaders and staff. This is securing the strong improvements that have been made recently.

- Plans for improvement focus well on the key actions to strengthen teaching and outcomes for pupils. However, you are not always clear about how much you want pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, to progress because of the actions you are taking. This limits precise analysis by you and your governors of how effective these actions are.
- Teachers plan interesting tasks to engage pupils well in their learning. They ensure that pupils draft and edit their writing to improve it. There is a touch of inconsistency in how extensively pupils write to make sure that they secure the highest standards. The leader of English is aware of this and is working to 'iron it out'. The vast majority read well, enjoy reading and are keen to read to adults.
- Teachers expect pupils to set out mathematical work logically and neatly to support good learning. Occasionally, pupils, particularly the most able, are not encouraged to tackle more challenging work swiftly enough in mathematics to make sure that their progress is better than good. An analysis of pupils' work showed few opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Pupils conduct themselves well and they have good attitudes to learning. Generally, they take pride in their work and handwriting is of a high standard. Occasionally, when teacher expectations are not high, pupils' presentation can vary and the quality of their work can slip.
- Pupils are tolerant and respectful of others. They all say that they are safe and that bullying is rare. They say that they 'trust staff and can share their worries and concerns', knowing that something will be done to support them effectively. Attendance is above average and few pupils are often absent.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and are aware of how to report safeguarding issues to the school or online to the NSPCC. Pupils are very clear about how to stay safe when using the internet as safety is promoted exceptionally well by the school through computer lessons, assemblies and the school website.
- Additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is spent well. You have identified the needs of these pupils well, and their barriers to learning, to make sure that their progress is good. Your deputy checks the work of disadvantaged pupils very regularly and it is clear that gaps in attainment are diminishing when compared to other pupils nationally.
- Governors are clear about the strengths and areas for development in the school. Some are new to their role and are contributing well under the good guidance of the chair of governors. Governors are well informed about the school through accurate local authority reporting, meetings with subject leaders and comprehensive headteacher reports.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans for improvement identify the progress you expect pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, to make because of actions being taken
- teachers check pupils' spelling meticulously to further strengthen writing
- pupils present their work to the highest standard at all times and check spelling carefully
- teachers make sure that pupils, particularly the most able, engage swiftly with challenging mathematical tasks
- pupils are skilled in using checking procedures in mathematics and apply their mathematical skills across a wide range of subjects
- staff check the phonics skills of least-able pupils carefully
- all staff are clear about the reporting of all safeguarding matters.

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

Yours sincerely

James McGrath
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met regularly with you and your deputy as part of a professional dialogue throughout the day. I also met with the chair of the governing body and one other governor. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I conducted an analysis of pupils' writing and mathematics work with the leaders of English and mathematics along with yourself. I observed a range of teaching and listened to pupils reading in each class. I spoke to pupils throughout the day about their safety and learning in school. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I analysed 18 staff questionnaires along with 69 parents' responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). I looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. I considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.