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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Alex Waterman
Headteacher
Cheriton Bishop Community Primary School
Church Lane
Cheriton Bishop
Exeter
Devon
EX6 6HY

Dear Mrs Waterman

Short inspection of Cheriton Bishop Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 December 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Since your appointment in September 2016, you have provided strong leadership. In spite of difficult decisions that had to be made, you have gained the confidence of parents, pupils and staff. You and the governing body ensure that the education provided by the school is solidly good.

Since the previous inspection, the school leaders, along with the other school leaders in the federation, have reviewed the future of the three schools, in particular the financial capacity for retaining the leadership structures. As a result, the schools are in the process of obtaining the necessary permission to enable them to join the Link Multi Academy Trust, a multi-academy trust (MAT). A group of parents continue to be unhappy with this decision and the way in which it has been undertaken.

This is a very small school that is growing, making the number of classes more sustainable. In the past, some year group sizes have been fewer than five, such as the Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2017. The school's reputation as providing a warm and friendly village school is attracting more pupils. Families new to the school are welcomed, and their children quickly make friends with their classmates. Older pupils take care of younger ones at playtimes.

The curriculum is an increasing strength. Pupils regularly participate in competitive sports, and enjoy artistic and creative activities. You ensure that trips, visits (including residential visits) and visitors enhance the curriculum. They are very effective in developing pupils' knowledge of, and interest in, life in the United Kingdom. In particular, the new homework scheme for older pupils is inspiring them to extend their knowledge of Brexit and law-making, as well as enhancing their writing skills.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to ensure that teachers expected more from pupils in English lessons, particularly from the most able. They were also asked to provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length when in lessons where the main focus is on subjects other than English, and for more pupils to write at greater depth. You have ensured that this is happening through 'mastery' sessions and have extended it to mathematics. Extending the challenge through mastery in pupils' science and topic work (work built around specific topics) is rightly next on your list to improve.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have established effective relationships with external agencies. You understand the thresholds for referrals and ensure that appropriate support is put in place, including for families who are not quite eligible for referral. This prevents some families needing external support. For example, you are making sure that pupils who are vulnerable due to their circumstances improve their attendance and make better progress.

Pupils told me they feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe in other contexts, such as when using social media. Pupils feel trusted, valued, and cared for, including those from different communities, those joining the school, and those who have additional needs. All parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agreed that their children were safe.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry on this inspection was to see how well the pupils' reading and writing were being developed. In 2017, 100% of pupils met the standard in the phonics screening test, and current pupils are on track to match this. Improving pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills has been a school target. Teachers and other adults have increased the challenge to pupils in their English and mathematics work. Pupils were very keen to tell me how they really enjoy 'having a go' at harder work when they feel confident, and being able to reaffirm their understanding when they are not. Adults make sure that when pupils are struggling they are appropriately supported. When we looked at pupils' work from their science (all year groups) and topic work (Years 5 and 6), we agreed that there were not enough opportunities provided for pupils to encourage them to challenge themselves to the same extent.

- The inspection's second line of enquiry was to check how well the curriculum prepares pupils for the next stage in their learning. Some pupils who have joined the school, other than at the usual times, did not benefit from the good quality of education provided by the school. In addition to needing to catch up with their peers, some pupils have complex learning needs. Adults involved with the school ensure that these pupils are getting the right amount of support at the right time. They are made to feel welcome by other children in the school and, as a result, they flourish.
- Pupils have a wide range of exciting and purposeful learning experiences. For example, during my visit, pupils in class two (Year 2) were enjoying developing their appreciation of the different colours of blue in the sea in their paintings. In class four (Years 5 and 6), all the pupils participated in a competitive game of tag rugby against local schools. Pupils in class four told me how they really appreciate the new approach to homework. Being able to choose the order in which they do the activities, the depth, range and length has really inspired them. They feel proud to be trusted to 'take charge' and to be empowered to demonstrate and extend their areas of interest.
- The final line of enquiry looked at how well you and the governing body have maintained the quality of good education, and kept pupils safe, since the previous inspection. You and the governing body have refined the processes, procedures and records relating to the safeguarding and safety of pupils. As a federation, the leaders ensure that new members of staff are appropriately vetted and interviewed. Staff and pupil records are appropriately kept. Staff receive regular training, including the administration of epi-pens. You ensure that staff receive the training so they keep up to date with their understanding of the risks pupils face. As a result, they are well informed about issues to do with child exploitation, extremism and radicalisation. They know what to do, and who to go to, if they have any concerns.
- Governors provide you with effective support and challenge to achieve the school's improvement goals. You, and governors, work closely with the leaders of the other schools that are part of the Woodleigh Federation, checking each other's work and sharing expertise.
- The application to become a part of the Link MAT went before the Devon Headteachers' Board in November 2017, and was accepted. The anticipated conversion date is 1 March 2018. A group of parents are not in favour of this change and do not feel that the communication from the governing body has been appropriate. The 'due diligence process' has already begun. This comprehensive review will provide a full understanding all of the risks, assets, liabilities and other relevant information for all the leaders of the federation and the Link MAT. As part of this process, the leadership and governance of the school will also be reviewed.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers build on the work already done in English and mathematics, to raise the levels of challenge in science and topic work
- the governing body improves its communication with parents.

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

Yours sincerely

Steffi Penny
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We agreed the timetable and activities for the day. I met with you, a group of governors and the acting chief executive officer of the Link MAT. I made a series of visits to lessons and watched pupils at play. I spoke with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work.

I considered a range of documents including those relating to pupils' progress, the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan. I reviewed the procedures you use to keep pupils safe, including a sample of vulnerable children's case files.

I considered the views of 37 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. This included 35 free-text responses. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the day and read four letters from parents. The 11 staff and 44 pupil responses to Ofsted's online surveys were also reviewed.