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Mrs Anna Gittins
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Dear Mrs Gittins

Short inspection of Bishop Hooper Church of England Primary

Following my visit to the school on 10 January 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders have continued the momentum of improvement over time. They systematically identify aspects of the school's work that can be tweaked and improved, then put in place and execute appropriate plans of action, carefully checking that their work achieves the desired aims. As a result, the quality of teaching throughout the school remains good, and most pupils continue to achieve good or better outcomes. Leaders and governors recognise, however, that not enough pupils achieve the higher standard in writing by the end of key stage 2.

You took up the post of headteacher just over a week ago. In this very short period of time, you have started to identify further improvements that will benefit the school and its pupils. The transition process from one headteacher to another has been smooth, and this has helped to maintain a sense of continuity and keep any parents' worries to a minimum.

School improvement plans include clear targets for further enhancing the quality of teaching and raising levels of achievement. These targets are based on accurate evaluation of pupils' achievement information. Leaders use a comprehensive system of assessment to track pupils' progress carefully. Teachers attend termly meetings to discuss individual pupils' achievement, which keeps their minds focused on ensuring that pupils do not fall behind. Teachers ensure that there is well-planned support for those pupils that need it. This helps to maintain good rates of progress.

Teachers typically plan lessons which engage and hold pupils' attention. Pupils participate in their learning with interest and enthusiasm, confidently sharing their ideas and working collaboratively with others. Teachers make learning enjoyable and help pupils to grasp challenging concepts through innovative teaching. For example, in science, pupils explored how light travels by forming a 'human model' using string to show how light rays are reflected. This helped pupils to write clear, accurate explanations about how light travels.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and spoke with genuine positivity about their learning experiences. The curriculum is broad and enables pupils to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects. Pupils are respectful to one another and staff; they care about their friends and look after each other. Pupils behave very well both in and out of the classroom, show good manners and try hard in lessons. Pupils are given responsibilities in school and take these seriously. For example, some older pupils organised a litter-pick as part of their 'eco-warriors' work.

Governors have a well-developed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For example, they recognise that there is further work to do in relation to boys' reading. Governors provide considered and purposeful direction for the school's further development. They visit the school regularly and have established themselves as an integral part of the school community. Records of their work show that they hold leaders to account robustly for pupils' achievement. The termly 'governor days' enable all governors to contribute proactively to school improvement and fulfil their strategic monitoring role effectively.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the experiences it offers their children. They appreciate the 'caring, nurturing environment' and the hard work of the teachers who commit to making learning purposeful and fun. I agree with these views. A few parents feel that homework is not always as well matched to their children's needs as it could be.

Leaders have addressed the areas for improvement that were identified at the last inspection well. Regular monitoring of pupils' learning, combined with targeted support and guidance for teachers, has meant that the quality of teaching continues to strengthen. However, you acknowledge that there is further work to do in relation to the teaching of writing and teachers' guidance to pupils on how to improve their written work. Leaders' actions to raise attainment in mathematics have been very successful. For the last three years, the proportions of pupils at the end of key stage 2 attaining at least the expected standard have been above national averages. Rates of progress have also increased. There has been a similar picture of improvement in pupils' mathematics at the end of key stage 1.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school and are safe because they are well looked after. Staff keep a watchful eye on all pupils and think about safety issues as part of the normal routines of the day. For example, appropriate risk assessments are

undertaken before a school trip. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Those responsible for appointing staff and volunteers carry out the necessary checks to reduce the risk of unsuitable adults working with children. Staff receive training about a range of safeguarding matters to help them spot potential concerns and fulfil their child protection responsibilities effectively. They understand and follow reporting procedures, should they have a concern about a pupil. However, while safeguarding records are detailed and stored securely, they are not always well organised, making retrieval of information more cumbersome than it needs to be.

Pupils are taught effectively about keeping safe through personal, social and health education lessons. For example, older pupils understand about the risks of posting personal information on the internet or accepting a 'friend request' when gaming. The school also arranges for trusted organisations to come into school, such as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), to provide workshops on aspects of personal safety. Pupils increase their knowledge and understanding as a result.

Inspection findings

- Boys, typically, do not achieve as well as girls in reading. Boys' progress in reading over time in key stage 2 is slower than girls' and they do not attain the same high standards as girls. Similarly, boys' achievement in reading at the end of key stage 1 is a relative weakness in comparison to girls'. Despite the discrepancy between girls' and boys' achievements, in 2017 all pupils attained at least the expected standard in reading by the end of key stage 2.
- The teaching of reading is generally effective. Pupils read age-appropriate books with reasonable fluency and expression. They show a good understanding of what they read. All pupils are expected to read at home regularly, and most do. Some boys are motivated to read by external rewards such as house points. Most pupils, including boys, show positive attitudes to reading. A well-stocked, comfortable and inviting school library is used frequently by boys and girls alike. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to talk about their reading or, indeed, share and promote their favourite books and stories.
- Sometimes, a few of the most able pupils in key stage 1 are given reading books which are too easy. This means that they do not have enough opportunities to practise and develop their reading skills. This slows their progress.
- Pupils do not do as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics. In 2016 and 2017, no pupils, including the most able pupils, achieved at a higher standard in writing by the end of key stage 2. However, there has been an improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in writing. In 2017, this was above the national average at the end of both key stages 1 and 2.
- Teachers usually prepare structured sequences of learning, which build pupils' writing skills progressively. The contexts for writing are often appealing to pupils. For example, in a key stage 2 class, pupils wrote in response to a purposeful homework task related to their parents' memories of school. Pupils were eager to

share their parents' recollections then write about them. Pupils benefit from planned opportunities to discuss their writing with peers and organise their thoughts before putting pen to paper.

- Pupils' grammar, spelling and punctuation skills are a strength. However, in some lessons, there is an overemphasis on teaching these skills to the detriment of wider compositional skills, such as structuring their writing well for an intended purpose or context. Furthermore, the teaching of writing is often pitched to the middle-ability pupils, which does not enable the most able pupils to be fully challenged.
- The quality of guidance that teachers provide to pupils on how they can improve their writing is variable. Sometimes, it is helpful and assists pupils to move forward in their learning, and at other times it is less effective. As a result, pupils' attempts to edit and improve their writing are met with varying degrees of success.
- Pupils who sometimes display challenging behaviour have their needs met well because of carefully planned support. Staff routinely evaluate the effectiveness of any bespoke support and make appropriate adaptations when necessary. There have been no exclusions since the start of the academic year 2016.
- Leaders have targeted the sport premium effectively to increase pupils' exposure to, and participation in, a wide range of sports. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the different sports they have tried, including cricket, netball, badminton and basketball. Teachers also feel better equipped to teach physical education (PE) because of the transferable skills they are gaining from working alongside professional sports coaches.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils are given appropriately challenging books to read, particularly in key stage 1
- teachers provide opportunities for pupils, especially boys, to discuss books, recommend 'good reads' and promote a wider interest in reading for pleasure
- the teaching of writing is enhanced so that it enables all pupils to make better rates of progress, especially the most able pupils
- there is a more refined and organised system for logging and storing any safeguarding concerns or associated documentation.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Hill
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held discussions with you about the school's self-evaluation, safeguarding and current priorities. I held a meeting with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also met with all teachers to discuss aspects of teaching and learning, and talked to several other staff members about how they keep pupils safe. I joined you in short visits to all classrooms, including Nursery, where we observed learning. I spoke to pupils about their work and looked at a range of books. I listened to several pupils read.

I evaluated a wide range of documents, including the school's improvement plan, school policies, pupils' assessment information, governors' documentation and records related to safeguarding. The views of parents were considered through the 15 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire and 12 free-text comments.