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Ms Sarah Weber
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Dear Ms Weber

Short inspection of Batheaston CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 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 September 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

You have high expectations of leaders, staff and pupils. You challenge, but also support them, to improve their work. You, leaders and governors, have succinctly evaluated the school's effectiveness and accurately identified areas for further school improvement. For example, you have ensured that more girls are now achieving higher standards in mathematics.

Your open communications with parents and commitment to making sure that their children achieve their best mean that the overwhelming majority of parents are confident in the school's leadership. Parents would recommend the school to other parents. The school's strong ethos based on valuing the views of all, pupils and adults alike, permeates the life of the school. Pupils are keen to learn, eager to challenge themselves and confident that their opinions will be listened to.

New senior leaders are quickly becoming confident in their roles thanks to the support and guidance that you are giving them. They are ensuring that high expectations of staff and pupils are communicated effectively to all staff. As a result, pupils' progress and attainment are continuing to improve. At the same time, the governing body has been reconstituted. New governors have received a thorough induction and are now working alongside more experienced governors in their monitoring roles. Leaders and governors are providing a strong strategic

direction for the school as it moves towards academisation. Governors are, however, aware that they need to fully implement recent changes, for example, by further refining some of their monitoring of the school's work.

At the time of the previous inspection, the school was asked to ensure that the activities pupils complete were interesting and provided challenge. You demonstrated that the system of whole-school topics, for example, the recent 'Respect 4 All' topic, provides a diverse range of interesting opportunities for pupils. Pupils contribute to the planning of their learning with their teachers. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and want to learn. This includes, for example, boys when writing and, increasingly, girls in mathematics.

At the previous inspection, the school was also asked to make more effective use of information about the progress of different groups of pupils and to ensure that governors could understand and monitor this. Leaders and teachers track closely the progress that every pupil makes as well as tracking the progress of different groups of pupils, such as those who are eligible for the additional pupil premium funding. Through the system of regular meetings about pupils' progress, leaders are robustly holding teachers to account for the progress that pupils make. Interventions are put in place swiftly to support pupils who may be at risk of falling behind. Governors look closely at the information that leaders provide. The training that they have undertaken in school performance information means that they can now challenge leaders more effectively about the progress that pupils make.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's culture of listening to all underpins the high priority placed on safeguarding. The school's safeguarding leads take swift action to keep vulnerable pupils safe. They work closely with a range of external agencies and keep informative and timely records. All the school's staff receive regular training, which means that they know what they will do if they have a concern about a child. The school ensures that all staff, volunteers and governors receive a specific safeguarding pack to read and keep.

Safeguarding information is very clearly displayed around the school. The school's single central record is meticulously kept. The recruitment and induction procedures for new staff demonstrate the high priority the school places on safeguarding. Governors monitor the school's safeguarding work through visits to the school, during which they talk with pupils, and are closely involved in ensuring that the school's policies and practices reflect the latest guidance.

Pupils of all ages told me how safe and happy they feel at school. Pupils know that adults will listen to them and that their views will be heard. They are firmly of the view that, if they have a concern, then the adults around them will help them to resolve it. Parents very strongly agree that their children are safe, happy and well looked after at this school and that any concerns will be listened to. Pupils I spoke with know clearly what bullying is and they were confident that it was uncommon at

their school. Their parents agree. Pupils' behaviour around the school is polite and friendly.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I looked at how well pupils write. Pupils' progress in writing in 2016 and 2017 was a little lower than their progress in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 6. You have ensured that writing is a key focus for the school's development. You and your staff are reflective and open to changing and adapting your practice to ensure that pupils' writing improves further. For example, there has been a renewed focus on phonics, spelling, grammar and handwriting. This means that more pupils are working to the increased expectations of the new assessment framework. For example, in 2017 at the end of Year 6, a far higher proportion of pupils reached the expected standards for their age in the English grammar, spelling and punctuation test than pupils nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching a higher level in this test was also well above the national level. Pupils' work shows that your actions in prioritising these areas have improved pupils' writing across the school.
- The contribution that pupils make to planning their learning motivates them to write well. Teachers make good use of approaches such as talking about writing so that pupils are prepared well to start writing. In a lesson on persuasive writing and the use of hyperbole in Year 6, for example, pupils and teachers shared their ideas and pupils were eager to begin writing. These activities are successful in providing both boys and girls with frameworks which help them develop and strengthen their writing. This is resulting in more pupils writing at a more complex level. These approaches are also successfully supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good, sometimes strong, progress in their writing. Occasionally, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in some curriculum subjects, such as science.
- I checked on how well the most able pupils do at school, particularly girls. Over time, the most able pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. You have accurately identified, however, that, in 2017 in particular, a few of the most able girls did not reach the higher standards for their age. In response, teachers have adapted their practice and now offer swifter challenge to girls, particularly in mathematics. Scrutiny of their work shows that, as a result of these actions, the progress of the most able girls is accelerating further, particularly in key stage 2. You have been careful to ensure that, in focusing on the most able girls, learning has not been lost for the most able boys.
- Lastly, I looked at how well disadvantaged pupils do at school. The support that disadvantaged pupils receive means that, across the school, they make good progress. Over time, disadvantaged pupils make progress similar to, and at times better than, other pupils. The most able disadvantaged pupils make strong progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. The additional funds for these pupils are well spent. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance is close to that of pupils nationally.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in longer pieces of work are increased in some curriculum subjects, in particular in science
- changes made to the teaching of writing and mathematics are consolidated so that more girls are enabled to work at a higher level
- governors further refine their monitoring of the school's work in the light of changes to the governing body.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah O'Donnell
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Together, we visited lessons and conducted a learning walk across the school. We talked with pupils about their learning and looked at their books. Together, we scrutinised the books of pupils in every year group. Pupils read to me from their own work and from their reading books. I observed and talked to pupils at breaktime and I met a group of pupils to hear about their school life.

I discussed with you and senior leaders the developments in the school since the previous inspection. I met governors and a representative of the local authority. I scrutinised the school's single central record and other safeguarding documents, including those relating to the safer recruitment of staff. I looked at the responses to Ofsted's online survey, 'Parent View' and the 36 comments that were submitted.