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Mrs L Hardman
Headteacher
Bishop Wood Church of England Junior School
Frogmore Street
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Hertfordshire
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Dear Mrs Hardman

Short inspection of Bishop Wood Church of England Junior School, Tring

Following my visit to the school on 31 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 July 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. I was impressed by the learning environment that you and your staff create, with attractive displays and celebration of pupils' written work. A sense of order and routine is apparent. Under your strong and effective leadership, you maintain a warm and welcoming school where your value of the 'uniqueness of children' is celebrated and respected. One statement made by a parent summed up the many positive comments received: 'Bishop Wood is a fantastic school, with wonderful caring staff and a lovely atmosphere for learning.'

Governors have an accurate view of what is working well and what could be better still. Although many are new to their positions, over this year governors have ensured that they have clear roles and responsibilities. They regularly visit the school and hold school leaders to account increasingly well for the progress that pupils make in all aspects of their education.

You have maintained the many strengths that were identified at the time of the previous inspection. The teaching of reading remains highly effective and systematic; pupils achieve exceptionally well over time and, by the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils who excel is significantly above that found nationally. This has been the case for a number of years.

Pupils start well at Bishop Wood. Due to your robust transition arrangements with the nearby infant school, pupils' needs are catered for and their move to the junior

school carefully planned. As a result, pupils settle quickly and pupils' positive attitudes to their learning are an excellent feature of your school.

Pupils are very polite and articulate. They have an obvious pride in their school and are eager to speak about their learning activities. Many told me about the additional sporting activities that are provided for them at lunchtimes and after school. They particularly enjoy learning in lessons such as design and technology. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the various artefacts they make that link to their topics such as the Egyptians.

Staff are equally proud to work at the school. Their responses to the staff questionnaire demonstrate they recognise that the school has improved since the previous inspection and that leaders encourage a culture of orderly conduct and aspiration for the pupils. One staff member commented, 'I am really proud of Bishop Wood School, the well-being of the children is at the centre of all we do.'

The mark of strong and effective leadership is how well you keep improving and provide precise goals for the school to achieve. Your improvement plans accurately identify that you still want pupils to excel further, especially those who are disadvantaged and those who are most-able.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory expectations. You and your governors take appropriate precautions to ensure that pupils are safe at school. You have established a strong safeguarding culture by training and developing staff and governors in the most up-to-date national safeguarding guidance. Staff know what to do if there are any concerns about a pupil.

Leaders have ensured that recording systems are fully in place for the recruitment of staff. Governors are rigorous in ensuring that the necessary checks have been made and that documents are kept in good order.

The vast majority of pupils who responded to the pupil questionnaire stated that if bullying occurs then staff deal well with it. A few parents expressed concern through the online questionnaire, Parent View, that they considered that bullying was not dealt with well enough. During the inspection, the pupils spoken to showed a clear understanding of what bullying is and what is not. They were certain that any incidents, if they ever occurred, were dealt with quickly and well. School records also showed that school leaders take any issues of inappropriate behaviour seriously and investigate them fully. Their recent changes to the whole-school system for promoting positive behaviour are proving effective and incidents are reducing as a result.

Most parents who responded on Parent View agreed that their children were safe and happy. One parent commented, 'I feel my children are well cared for and nurtured.' Inspection evidence supports this view.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I explored how well leaders and teachers are improving pupils' progress in mathematics. This is because in 2016, the overall progress pupils made in mathematics was lower than in reading and writing. It was clearly evident at my visit that you have highlighted this as an area to improve in your school improvement plan. From my visits to classes, accompanied by you, we found that pupils enjoy mathematics lessons and receive well-planned learning activities that systematically build their numerical skills. Some Year 3 pupils explained that they are learning their time tables quicker because more is expected of them now they are 'junior school pupils'.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with precise and highly practical sessions that help these pupils to develop their understanding and skills. In one small-group session seen, older pupils were learning about angles of a triangle. Through the adult's careful explanation and effective use of resources, these pupils were successful in their learning of this challenging concept.
- You recognise that at times the most able pupils could be challenged more, especially in lower key stage 2. From the evidence in their exercise books, it was clear that the most able pupils are provided with learning activities that use more demanding numbers. However, they are not provided with sufficiently regular opportunities to use and apply their skills in a range of different ways so that even more reach above age-related expectation. You already have firm plans in place for training and developing staff skills further so they can meet the needs of the most able pupils even more precisely in mathematics.
- In the previous inspection, reading was considered to be a strength. In this inspection I explored whether this remains the case. You have a systematic approach to reading and some pupils in Year 3 continue with developing their understanding and use of phonics so that they consolidate the learning from key stage 1. Your well-trained teaching assistants are highly effective in routinely leading learning for small groups of pupils. Through the teaching assistant's skilful questioning, one pupil was not only able to read the words of a text but also to demonstrate his understanding and enjoyment of his reading book.
- In addition, in all classes, reading lessons are well organised, and pupils told me they happen every day. Through a well-structured weekly programme of activities, pupils complete spelling and grammar work as well as read with the teacher. From pupils' English books in Year 5, it is clear that pupils are inspired by reading 'The Hobbit'. Their extended writing demonstrated their understanding and many used well-chosen words to express their ideas. The proportion of pupils who reached the required standard in reading at the end of 2016 was significantly above that found nationally. This is also true for those who reached the higher standard. Pupils in the school made more progress in reading than pupils nationally. This has been the case since the previous inspection and reading remains a strength of the school.
- I also considered how well school leaders ensure that groups of pupils achieve as well as they can, in particular those who are disadvantaged and disadvantaged pupils who are most-able. From considering the work in their books, disadvantaged pupils are taking every opportunity to complete their work and

most are making good progress in their learning as a result. You have already identified that the most able disadvantaged pupils could achieve even more, particularly in mathematics, and these have been included in your plans for this current year.

- In 2016, the attendance for pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who have special educational needs was lower than for others in school and was in the lowest 10% nationally. Persistent absenteeism was also an issue for both of these groups in 2016. This was a key line of enquiry for this inspection. I found that this year there is still an issue with some pupils' persistent absenteeism, particularly for these groups. Currently, you use some of the additional pupil premium funding to employ a family support worker, which is proving effective with some families in increasing pupil attendance. You recognise that more could be done to reduce persistent absenteeism further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- provide regular learning opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in a range of different ways so that the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and most-able, can excel
- systematically and rigorously reduce the persistent absenteeism for those who are disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the diocese of St Albans, and the director of children's services for Hertfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kim Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- Over the course of the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, other leaders and governors to discuss the progress of the school since the previous inspection.
- I gathered a wide range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This included: short observations of lessons, jointly with you, in all classes; and sampling of pupils' current work across all subjects and a wide range of abilities.
- I spoke to a number of pupils informally in classrooms, at lunchtime and listened to pupils read in class. The teaching of phonics was seen.
- I looked at a range of documentation, including information about the school's self-evaluation and plans for future improvement, governors' minutes, attendance and pupils' achievement.

- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff, and case studies about referrals made to external agencies.
- I took account of 87 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 46 responses parents provided using the free text service.
- The views of staff were considered from 16 responses together with 103 responses from pupils to their questionnaire.