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Mr Paul Thompson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Thompson

### **Short inspection of Bryn Offa CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 16 May 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 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

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

You provide strong leadership in partnership with the deputy headteacher and a skilled governing body. This effective leadership enables a good response to any areas for improvement that arise.

Bryn Offa CofE Primary School provides a well-rounded education for its pupils. You have continued to develop an ethos in which pupils thrive. There is a strong sense of teamwork because relationships between staff, pupils and parents are very good. Pupils are considerate and caring and they enjoy coming to school. You have ensured that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well catered for. Pupils have mature views and speak confidently when sharing their opinions about the world around them.

The vast majority of parents are rightly satisfied with the quality of education that the school provides. Parents who were spoken to during the inspection and those who recorded a response on Ofsted's Parent View website were overwhelmingly positive. One comment reflected the views of most: 'My children are very well looked after and happy. The staff support them really well to make progress in their learning.'

Pupils enjoy learning at this school. Teachers plan learning activities that capture pupils' imagination and provide effective challenge. Teaching assistants support pupils' learning very well. As a result, pupils make good progress. They get off to a very strong start in the early years because of good teaching and leadership. A high proportion of pupils reach the expected standards at the end of the Reception Year and in phonics in Year 1. Pupils in key stage 1 also achieve well. You and I identified that some pupils' progress is inconsistent in reading, grammar and punctuation in the middle part of key stage 2. In the 2016 national tests, Year 6 pupils achieved well in mathematics and writing. However, some pupils did not do as well in reading. Your current assessment information shows that pupils currently in Year 6 are making rapid progress. A high proportion of pupils are on track for the expected and higher standards in all subjects.

Despite some early signs of improvement in reading, you have rightly identified that the teaching of reading comprehension requires further improvement in key stage 2. This is because teachers do not consistently plan challenging questions that develop pupils' higher-level reading skills.

At the last inspection, you were asked to address the level of challenge for the most able pupils. You closely track the progress of this group and set them challenging targets. Additionally, you have made this aspect a focus for staff's professional development and performance management. As a result, the proportion of the most able pupils achieving the higher standards is increasing.

You were also asked to extend pupils' cultural experiences. This has been addressed and pupils are developing an understanding of cultures beyond their own community. Pupils spoke with knowledge and enthusiasm about some of the experiences that they have had, such as visiting a mosque and a Sikh guest coming into school for a curriculum project.

You and your staff have designed a very effective assessment system which makes sure that assessment information is reliable. Furthermore, you and the deputy headteacher track closely information about pupils' progress. These processes enable you to identify areas for improvement and take appropriate action. For example, mathematics was a weaker area for the school in the past, but it has now been addressed and, as a result, pupils are making good progress.

In your improvement plan, you accurately identified that pupils' skills in handwriting, punctuation and grammar need to be improved. Pupils are now being taught these aspects more effectively. However, some pupils do not transfer these skills into their writing precisely enough. Furthermore, teachers do not have consistently high expectations for the quality of presentation in pupils' writing.

Other curriculum subjects are well catered for. Pupils love the science curriculum. They spoke with knowledge and enthusiasm about their investigations and the practical work that teachers plan for them. One comment from a younger child was: 'I love science. We tested which drink was the fizziest and had the most carbon dioxide in it by shaking the drinks and then weighing them.' As a result of the good

teaching they receive, pupils' scientific understanding is developing well.

School trips and extra-curricular clubs help to provide rich wider experiences for pupils. For example, pupils were excited by their trip to Powys Castle for history and their trip to a science centre. Pupils also spoke passionately about how they appreciate the range of clubs that they do in school. They spoke about the various clubs including gardening, choir, drama, judo, guitar, athletics, football and cookery. These wider opportunities are having a significant impact on pupils' personal development and their enjoyment of school.

You and the deputy headteacher check the quality of teaching in classrooms and provide effective professional development for most staff. However, there is some variability in teaching in the middle part of key stage 2. You recognise that further professional development is needed in order to bring about greater consistency in this area of the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements. Leaders, staff and governors take pupils' safety very seriously, which leads to a culture of vigilance. You update your policy regularly and ensure that it meets statutory guidelines. More importantly, this policy is evident in practice in the school. Staff have a good understanding of what to do if they are concerned about a child. They receive regular training updates to keep abreast of guidance. Procedures for recruiting and carrying out checks on staff are effective. You have been particularly tenacious regarding safety procedures at key times of the school day. For example, procedures for supervision at the start and end of the school day are very thorough.

Pupils' understanding of safety is a strength. Regular visits from outside speakers help improve their understanding of how to stay safe. For example, pupils spoke about the police, the ambulance service and the fire service coming into school to talk about various aspects of safety. Pupils also have a very clear understanding about the importance of fire drills and how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Parents echo this culture of safety in their survey responses. All parents agree, and the vast majority strongly agree, that their child feels safe at school.

Governors carry out their statutory responsibilities effectively. They challenge leaders on aspects of safeguarding in meetings and they make checks on health and safety during their visits to school. They have rightly identified that they could check other aspects of safeguarding during their visits.

### **Inspection findings**

- The teaching that I observed with you and the work in pupils' books show that pupils of all abilities make good progress over time. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. They want to do well and they talk about their learning enthusiastically with other pupils and with staff. The rich curriculum is a strength of the school and has a strong impact on pupils' personal development.

- You and I looked at the quality of teaching in the early years. About half of the pupils enter Reception with skills that are below those typical for their age. Pupils make good progress and nearly all children achieve the expected standards by the time they leave Reception. The early years leader and other staff have high expectations. They plan stimulating lessons and precise interventions to meet pupils' needs within the mixed-age Reception and Year 1 class.
- During the inspection, we also looked at how pupils' writing is progressing in key stage 1. In 2016, achievement was good in mathematics and reading. However, pupils' progress in writing was not as strong, especially for boys. The work in pupils' books showed that the school's new approach to writing is having a positive impact on boys. Pupils are taught to plan their writing through pictures and with key vocabulary. They then tell their story out loud before starting to write. This structured and inclusive approach is helping boys to develop their ideas with greater fluency. However, some pupils do not use punctuation as accurately as they should.
- One of the other key areas that we looked at was pupils' progress in reading, grammar and punctuation in key stage 2. In the 2016 national tests, Year 6 pupils did not make as much progress as they should have in these areas. During the inspection, we observed teaching and looked at pupils' books across key stage 2. While you have started to address these areas, there is still work to be done. In reading, teachers do not provide consistently challenging questions so that pupils can develop higher-level reading skills. There has been a greater focus on the teaching of grammar and punctuation, but some pupils do not transfer newly learned punctuation skills accurately into their writing.
- When we observed teaching and looked at pupils' books, there were some inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' work in the middle of key stage 2. Professional development has not been targeted precisely enough at individual teachers. You have plans to address this.
- The quality of pupils' presentation and handwriting varies in the school because teachers do not have consistently high expectations of the standards expected.
- Pupils' mathematical skills and understanding are developing well. Pupils enjoy mathematics and apply their skills regularly. Sometimes, teachers provide pupils with different levels of challenge to choose from. This motivates pupils and they often choose a challenge that is suitable. The school's current assessment information and national test results from 2016 show that progress in mathematics is good and improving.
- We also looked at rates of attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. In 2016, the rate of attendance for this group below the national average. However, you have a small number of disadvantaged pupils and isolated cases of lower attendance make the attendance data statistically unreliable. You are proactive in supporting any families whose children have lower attendance. You use external services well in providing this support. Overall attendance was in line with the national average in the academic year 2015/16 and has improved beyond that so far this academic year.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of reading provides sufficient challenge for pupils and helps them to develop higher-level reading skills
- teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' writing, particularly the quality of presentation and handwriting and the accurate use of punctuation
- leaders address any inconsistencies in teaching with swift professional development and support.

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

Yours sincerely

Matt Meekin  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher. I also met with the chair of governors and three other governors. I spoke to pupils informally and formally. I made short visits to every classroom with you and we looked at pupils' books. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and considered 37 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View. I also considered 35 free-text responses from parents.

I scrutinised various documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan, information about teachers' performance management and the documents that you use to check the quality of teaching. You shared with me the school's most recent assessments of pupils' attainment and progress and we discussed the national test results and assessments undertaken by pupils in 2016. I also looked at the school's published information on the website, as well as minutes of governing body meetings and information about attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.