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Mrs Vanessa Pearce
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Pearce

Short inspection of Beaudesert Lower School

Following my visit to the school on 19 September 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 January 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have developed a strong, caring team, whose members share your ethos of creating a school, where 'everyone has the opportunity to excel' and where the 'possibilities are endless'. This is a real strength of the school. Several parents commented about the 'can do' culture. For example, one parent remarked, 'This school strives to help find every child's full potential regardless of what that may be.' Pupils told me they 'know all about perseverance'.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about every aspect of the school. All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend Beaudesert Lower School. One parent stated, 'My child really enjoys coming to school and couldn't wait for the summer holidays to finish.'

Many parents also commented positively upon the difference you and your deputy headteacher have made since you started at the school, due to your 'hands on' approach and 'endless enthusiasm' to improve the school. You ensure that families have the support they need either by providing resources which are sent home, such as maths and reading packs, or by seeking external help from other professionals. You have worked hard to develop links with parents and carers and the local community. As a result, the school is now popular within the local community, as reflected by the high number of applications for school places.

Results from Ofsted's staff questionnaire confirm that they are all proud to be a member of the school and agree that the school is well led. You have used professional development to encourage, challenge and support teachers'

improvement, which staff have valued. The school has strengthened its leadership by investing in specific training to develop senior and middle leaders. This has assisted them in their work to drive improvements. The early years leader, for example, is now a specialist leader in education.

Pupils are polite and well behaved due to their understanding of the school's values. They enjoy coming to school due to the range of activities offered, including a variety of clubs and the 'learning we do'. Pupils feel valued and included in school life. They relish the leadership roles the school provides, such as being a digital leader or learning mentor.

In collaboration with your leadership team and the governing body, you are addressing effectively the priorities identified in your school improvement plan. The previous inspection identified that pupils were not always clear how to improve their work. You have tackled this through ensuring that pupils have pertinent feedback and guidance to accelerate their progress. For example, the children in Reception understand their next steps in writing due to the 'writing journal' display in the classroom.

You recognise that there are still areas which need to improve. For example, you acknowledge that more pupils could make better progress in reading, writing and maths to reach even higher levels. You also know that more pupils could make greater progress in writing, so that writing outcomes are in line with reading and mathematics. You accepted my evidence that the school website was not compliant prior to the inspection and agreed that it should be updated regularly.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, ensure that safeguarding is a priority of the school and all arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding undertake appropriate training. Staff receive up-to-date information through meetings they attend with leaders and regular training in safeguarding ensures that they are able to follow the school's procedures. The school's records are detailed and maintained well. They show where there has been involvement of support agencies, with actions followed up in a timely way.

Pupils told me that they always feel safe and happy in school. They define bullying accurately and state that they know they have adults in school who will listen and help. E-safety is promoted well throughout the school, which ensures that pupils know how to stay safe online. Pupils explained to me that through lessons and specially-arranged talks on topics, such as fire safety, they understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations. All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children are kept safe.

Inspection findings

- To confirm that the school remains good, one of my key lines of enquiry was about how leaders have improved the outcomes for the most able pupils. This was because at the previous inspection, inspectors asked that you provide

sufficiently demanding work for these pupils. However, in 2017, the proportions of pupils working at greater depth by the end of key stage 1 was below the national average in reading, writing and maths.

- You have put in place improvements to the teaching, learning and assessment of reading, writing and mathematics across the school. As a result, there are more opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge. Leaders carefully monitor pupils' progress to ensure that they are effectively challenged.
- There is now a well-designed mathematics curriculum which includes logically sequenced programmes of learning through a wide range of activities, including more opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills to a higher level. For example, mathematics books showed a variety of tasks on fractions from recognising $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ to comparing fraction amounts. Pupils have a wide range of resources to support their understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Pupils study a range of complex texts to enable them to craft their writing with skill and precision. New reading resources have been purchased for pupils to read at a higher level.
- As a result, outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics in 2018, at the end of key stage 1, showed that more pupils reached the greater depth standard. Current school information also shows an increase in pupils reaching greater depth across all year groups. However, this is not yet consistent for all groups of pupils across the school. Compared to other pupils, fewer boys and fewer disadvantaged pupils reach greater depth in some subjects.
- My second key line of enquiry was about pupils' achievement in phonics. Since 2015, the number of pupils who met the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above the national average. However, in 2017, there was a decline.
- You responded by reviewing and amending how phonics is taught in the school. Leaders have put in place a carefully planned approach, which teachers follow closely to ensure that it accurately matches pupils' needs and capabilities. Teachers and teaching assistants teach phonics precisely and well. They provide a range of activities, including the sounding out of words, and reading and writing tasks that interest, and challenge pupils.
- Pupils read to me confidently using the skills learned in their phonics sessions to decode unfamiliar words accurately. Work in pupils' phonic books demonstrates that they are increasingly assured in their spelling. The recently introduced 'practice page' in their literacy books has further supported pupils' confidence to apply their skills and 'have a go'. Parents are encouraged to support phonics learning at home by practising letter sounds learned at school the previous week.
- Leaders ensure that high-quality support is provided for pupils who are not confident readers. As a result, in 2018, the number of pupils who met the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above the national average.
- My third key line of enquiry was about pupils' progress and attainment in writing across the school. This was because in 2017 pupils' achievements in writing were much weaker than in reading and mathematics, compared to previous years.

- As identified in your school improvement plan, you have focused on improving writing across the school, in particular by increasing pupils' vocabulary. Due to your view that, 'reading is the key that opens the door for writing', the school has invested in a wider range of books to increase pupils' vocabulary, as well as author studies and a word of the week in each classroom. As a result, pupils are using more adventurous vocabulary in their writing.
- The previous inspection identified that not all pupils have opportunities to write at length on a regular basis. I found that pupils in all year groups have opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing across the curriculum. Consequently, pupils have opportunities to increase their writing stamina alongside writing for a range of purposes, audiences and text types. Pupils also develop their enjoyment of writing through working in groups across year groups to produce their own texts such as 'The Zoo'.
- You recognise that children in early years are entering school with less developed speaking skills and have provided more opportunities for oral rehearsal before writing. This has had a positive impact on writing outcomes at the end of Reception.
- As a result of your actions, in 2018, the number of pupils at the end of key stage 1 reaching the expected standard in writing increased. However, you agree that not enough boys are writing at the expected standard.
- Finally, I evaluated how effectively leaders and governors carry out their statutory responsibilities, with particular regard to providing information on the school website. You rightly acknowledge that, at the start of the inspection, some information on the school website was either missing or out of date. All necessary changes were made during the inspection. My meeting with governors confirmed that they know the school well and understand their legal responsibilities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more pupils continue to achieve higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly boys and disadvantaged pupils
- improvements continue across the school in writing, particularly for boys, so that outcomes are in line with reading and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Rachel Welch
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you to discuss progress since the previous inspection and to agree the key lines of enquiry. I also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, two representatives from the local authority and the school council. I spoke to the English and mathematics leader, the leader with responsibility for disadvantaged pupils and the phonics leader. I scrutinised a variety of sources of information, including your plans for improvement, local authority reports and assessment information for all year groups. I examined the school's safeguarding procedures, child protection documentation and procedures. I also listened to pupils read in Years 1, 2 and 3. We visited classrooms and looked at books in all classes. I also looked at 66 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, 43 pupil survey responses and 29 staff survey returns.