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Mr Raj Barard
Headteacher
Bosley St Mary's CofE Primary School
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Dear Mr Barard

Short inspection of Bosley St Mary's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 October 2016, 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 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As headteacher for the last three years at the school, appointed since the previous inspection, you have tackled previous weaknesses. You have a clear vision for further improvements to the learning environment and to ensure greater continuity of care from the Nursery through to Year 6. Your dedicated team of staff share this vision and strive to create a secure, caring family atmosphere underpinned by a close relationship with the church.

You have improved the way in which action plans were written at the time of the last inspection. They are now much sharper, with clear and concise actions to be taken to bring about improvement. You have made it clear who is responsible for each action and how you and governors will hold teachers to account for pupils' achievements, through monitoring. You want to make sure your actions make the intended difference, so you have carefully built external validation into your plans, through your school improvement partner, representatives from the local authority and through your partnership work with other schools in the Congleton Education and Community Partnership. Plans could be improved by setting targets for all pupils, to make the progress they should from their starting points, especially pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have come from other schools.

Attainment in mathematics was not consistently good enough across the whole

school at the last inspection. You have taken steps to tackle this and have recently engaged an external consultant to support your work in introducing a mastery approach to the teaching of mathematics, to make sure that all pupils make better progress. Classrooms are now better equipped to support learning in mathematics, especially for pupils who are slow to grasp concepts, because you have purchased much-needed mathematical equipment. You have also invested funds in training teachers in the effective use of some of this equipment. During the inspection, the key stage 2 pupils were seen tackling a problem with confidence and enthusiasm as they found out more about Roman numerals and applied their knowledge of place value. Pupils readily discussed their mathematical ideas with partners. You plan to continue with external support to develop mathematics teaching further because you are not satisfied that it is as good as it should be.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have continued to make certain that pupils are safe on the school site but also that they know how to keep themselves safe outside school, such as when using the internet at home. The school works closely with the police community support officer, who has talked to pupils in assembly about road safety, internet safety and anti-bullying. School council representatives and pupils on the playground demonstrated that they had understood the key messages from these talks, as they told me how adults, who may mean them harm, can pretend to be someone else 'on the computer'.

Pupils are confident that there are no bullies at the school and told me that if they had any worries they would ask their teacher for help. Pupils demonstrate genuine care and compassion towards each other. One pupil explained to me how the 'buddy bench' is used by anyone feeling lonely or who does not have a friend to play with. If pupils see someone sitting alone on the bench, they invite that person to join in their game.

School leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of good quality. All staff have completed online training in looking out for the signs that pupils may be influenced by extremist or radical views. Governors know about the key changes to safeguarding from reading 'Keeping children safe in education' (2016). Training was planned for all staff during the week of the inspection. Governors know there is still further work to do to enable them to be confident that the school internet monitoring and filtering systems are fully effective.

Inspection findings

- Pupils love this school. They work and play exceptionally well together and there is a really strong sense of community and belonging to the school family. They are happy here, are enthusiastic learners and genuinely care for each other. Pupils' conduct is exemplary. They are polite, welcoming of visitors and keen to share their views of their school.
- The strong community spirit evident in the school is underpinned by a strong

sense of moral purpose, which is supported by the close links with the local church. The vicar frequently speaks to pupils in assembly and pupils talked enthusiastically about their recent learning about Christian baptism. They enjoyed playing the different roles of parents and godparents and felt they understood this better because of their role play. Their knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures is less strong, although some pupils have visited a mosque and a Sikh temple.

- Parents who spoke with me are highly positive about the care and support provided for their children. They know how the pupil premium funding is allocated to their children, if eligible, and recognise the difference this is making. For example, the provision of a sand tray has helped support pupils' engagement with learning and the development of their letter formation.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate. They have a clear understanding of the reasons why the school is not yet outstanding, namely the lack of consistency in overall achievement for different year groups. The school readily welcomes pupils other than at the start of the year or key stage. Some join the school with social, emotional or medical needs that have not been identified soon enough at their previous school. Not all of these pupils go on to make the progress they should. More work is needed to identify gaps in learning quickly, provide additional support if it is required and to raise teachers' expectations for these pupils, so that they consistently make at least the same progress as classmates who started in the school in Reception.
- Most pupils who start in Reception have previously attended the on-site nursery, which is inspected separately from the school. Teachers share some of the outside learning spaces. Plans to develop these areas further are designed to support sharing of effective teaching practice and improve transition arrangements to school.
- Phonics teaching has improved because of the effective training that staff have received. Most pupils quickly learn the new sounds and know how they are used in words. Some pupils are ready for more challenging work sooner than planned for by the teachers. Not all teachers are as skilled as others in assessing pupils.
- Improvements made to reading across the school are evident. You have replaced your stock of reading books in the school library and introduced a new reading scheme. Pupils like the new colour-coded books and say that they have a good range of stories to choose from. Pupils are now guided to choose books that are appropriately challenging, so that their literacy skills develop further.
- Writing has been a key priority for development across the school. Moderation activities take place with other schools in the Congleton partnership and with the support of the local authority. Teacher assessments are accurate and fewer changes were made to scores this year than in the past.
- Mathematics teaching is improving and pupils now have the opportunity to choose equipment that is readily available in the classrooms, to help them to solve problems. Further support for teachers is planned as they increase their understanding of mastery in mathematics, to make sure that all pupils are appropriately challenged in their work.

- New teachers and a new teaching assistant have been appointed since the previous inspection and the school has a stable team of staff who are committed to improving this school further. Staff who responded to Ofsted's survey are proud to be a member of staff at this school and say that they are encouraged and supported in their professional development.
- Governors, keen to improve governance further and following the appointment of a new chair, commissioned their own review of their work. This took place in January 2015. Decisive action was taken in response to its findings, which resulted in a restructuring of the committees to focus on changes needed to improve teaching and learning. They were not aware that the school website did not meet current DfE requirements but took immediate action to update it with the latest documentation during the inspection.
- Leaders receive effective support and challenge from the school improvement partner, the local authority and a range of partnerships with schools of a similar size, in the Congleton area.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to engage with external support to develop teaching, learning and assessment further, especially in phonics and mathematics
- all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make consistently strong progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Denah Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The key lines of enquiry for this inspection were to find out if safeguarding continues to be effective and to look closely at how leaders, including governors, have improved their knowledge of the school and the way they use their action plans to drive improvement in the school. Owing to the very small size of classes in the school, any trends in achievement are difficult to identify. However, a key line of enquiry was to find out what leaders have done to bring about the improvements in early years and in phonics and to investigate further what actions are being taken to improve progress in mathematics for all pupils, including the most able.

During this inspection, I met you and your staff, a group of governors including the chair of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority. I also held a telephone conversation with your school improvement partner. I considered the views of parents by talking to them as they brought their children to school. I also looked at the 14 responses to Ofsted's parents' survey. These included 10 written comments. I met the school council and talked with other pupils at playtime and during their lunchtime. You joined me in short visits to lessons and in a tour of the school site, as I examined the improvements you have made to teaching and learning. I listened to pupils read, including more confident readers, and carried out checks on safeguarding documentation.