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Mrs Joanna Bryan
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bryan

Short inspection of Peterchurch Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 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 May 2012.

This school continues to be good.

Since your appointment in September 2015 you have built on the strengths identified in the school at the last inspection to ensure that Peterchurch has maintained a good quality of education.

You have presided over a successful transition from the previous leadership, winning the hearts and minds of the school community including parents, pupils and staff. Equally you have not been afraid to challenge where you have judged that further improvements were needed, for example in outcomes for middle-attaining pupils and in attendance.

As a consequence of your good leadership:

- middle-attaining pupils currently in school are now making more rapid progress
- overall outcomes are improving in reading, writing and mathematics, including for boys
- high-attaining and disadvantaged pupils have continued to do very well throughout the school
- outcomes have improved in the early years, including for numeracy
- attendance has significantly improved since 2015 and is now well above the national average

- almost all parents and staff who responded to surveys and questionnaires agreed that the school is well led
- you have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development, and why the school is not yet outstanding
- you are developing a shared leadership which has led to middle leaders taking on more responsibilities.

In the previous inspection report inspectors praised leaders for the school's effective system for managing, evaluating and supporting teaching. Since you were appointed, you have continued the drive for further improvement through rigorous monitoring of pupils' outcomes and holding teachers to account through pupil progress meetings.

In the last report inspectors stated that the school should improve teaching by raising the level of challenge in lessons for middle-ability pupils and sustaining the brisk pace of learning in all lessons. In the most recent tests and assessments in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6, outcomes for middle-attaining pupils and boys were still not as high as the national average. However, your detailed monitoring of pupils currently in school indicates that middle-attaining pupils and boys are now making very rapid progress across most year groups. This has been achieved by ensuring that middle-attaining pupils and boys are challenged to do well in lessons. Those at risk of falling behind are targeted for support and appropriate material is used to stimulate their interest in reading.

You recognise that this is not yet an outstanding school. Outcomes for middle-attaining pupils still need to improve further, the school does not meet all its requirements for reporting on special educational needs, and the early years setting (especially outside) is in urgent need of refreshing and refurbishment.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is at the top of leaders' and governors' agendas at all times. Designated leaders and governors are well trained and are up to date in the guidance they receive. Leaders ensure that all staff are also fully informed of the latest guidance and are regularly trained. They make referrals and involve other agencies in a timely way and records are kept safely and securely. Governors too are vigilant and know what to do to ensure the school meets all its safeguarding requirements.

Pupils who spoke to me were unanimous that they felt safe in school. The site is secure. The development of pupil digital leaders has ensured that pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the internet by not passing on personal information about themselves to strangers.

Inspection findings

- You have strengthened and widened the leadership team through delegating responsibilities for key subjects such as mathematics to other members of staff. This is building the school's capacity for the future and has already led to improvements in this subject. Middle leaders are developing in their roles but have not yet taken on the monitoring of teaching.
- Governors are very knowledgeable and highly committed to their roles. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development for the school and, like you, recognise that while the school is improving it is not yet outstanding. They are well informed about the quality of teaching in each year group and how well pupils are progressing. This allows them to make informed judgements about recommendations on teachers' pay.
- Attendance has rapidly improved under your relentless drive to stamp out unauthorised absence. Consequently the rates of overall and persistent absence are very low, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- You have successfully challenged parents on attendance and they have responded by giving you their whole-hearted support. Responses to Parent View and those made to Ofsted by text were overwhelmingly positive about the impact of your leadership.
- You are tracking the progress of different groups of pupils much more closely, including the progress of middle-attaining pupils and boys in each year group. School information up to Christmas 2016 indicates that these pupils are now making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics across most year groups in key stages 1 and 2.
- These improvements result from the closer scrutiny and accountability in pupil progress meetings. Where additional support is available in the classroom this is now targeted at any middle-attaining pupils who need to catch up as well as at other groups. Teachers plan lessons to provide pace and challenge for middle-attaining pupils to the extent that they are now the group in school making the most rapid progress.
- Outcomes improved for children in the early years in 2016 based on the proportion reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. The proportion achieving the expected standard in the early learning goals in numbers and in shape, space and measures was high for all children including boys. These high standards have been achieved by enhancing the provision for numeracy activities in the early years, prompted by external scrutiny in the form of a one-day review. During my visit to early years, children both inside and outside were successfully developing their understanding of shape and number.
- High-attaining pupils and the small number of disadvantaged pupils have continued to do very well in their outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics in key stages 1 and 2. The very small number of pupils on the special educational needs register are tracked very closely to ensure that they make progress in line with other pupils.
- Almost all pupils behave very well in school. This was confirmed by my conversations with pupils and the views of the overwhelming majority of parents. There have been isolated incidents leading to a small number of exclusions but

the school has taken appropriate steps to address them. Pupils seen in lessons during the inspection were keen to participate and willing to learn.

- The school ensures that it complies with what it should publish on its website. However the information it provides about its arrangements for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities does not meet all the requirements set out by the Department for Education. The early years environment, particularly outside, is underdeveloped. Children have access to a limited range of resources and activities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the role of middle leaders is enhanced further so that they have the time and resources to monitor teaching and outcomes in their areas of responsibility
- information published on provision and outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities meets government requirements
- improvements to the early years setting, especially the outdoor area, provide a more attractive environment and a wider range of activities linked to curriculum areas.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Herefordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, other leaders and members of staff, a group of pupils, and five members of the governing body including the chair and vice-chair. I spoke by telephone to a representative from the local authority and to the school's improvement partner. I visited parts of four lessons, observed jointly with the headteacher. I also observed pupils as they moved around the school. There were 25 responses to Parent View and 24 responses to Parent View free text. I also took account of 15 pupil survey responses and six staff survey responses.

I considered the effectiveness of the arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils, how well behaviour and attendance are managed, outcomes for pupils including

those for boys and for pupils who are middle-attaining, provision in the early years, particularly for numeracy, and provision for special educational needs.