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James Everett
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Dear Mr Everett

Short inspection of Barnham Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 May 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since the school became an academy in July 2015, you have led the school with passion and a determination to fulfil the school's aim of helping all pupils to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. Your outward-looking approach to the school's continual improvement has ensured that your evaluation of the school's current effectiveness is accurate.

Almost all pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthused about learning. Pupils who spoke to the inspector commented on how the school's topic-based curriculum makes their learning 'interesting' and 'exciting'. They are confident to persevere when they find work challenging but also talk positively about the help teachers give them when they need support. Copious opportunities for pupils to develop their resilience and confidence are embedded across the curriculum, which help to prepare pupils well for their next steps in education.

Parents and carers are happy with all aspects of the school's work. They are complimentary about the inclusive ethos and inspiring nature of the school's staff. Parents stated that communication links between home and school are 'strong' and appreciate the commitment staff show to all aspects of their child's development. Parents described the school as somewhere every child is supported to 'be the best that they can be'.

At the time of the predecessor school's last inspection, inspectors highlighted the many strengths of the school, including the rich variety of experiences provided to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also identified the needs for teachers to target their questioning effectively in order to extend pupils' learning, to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that most-able pupils are challenged and for teaching assistants to be deployed effectively. Most-able pupils now receive sufficient challenge through the use of the school's 'star challenge' initiative. As a result, most-able pupils are making increasingly strong progress, particularly in English and mathematics at key stage 2. Leaders have worked hard to ensure that teachers' questioning enables pupils to deepen their learning. Classroom visits demonstrated that this is having a positive impact on the depth of knowledge that pupils acquire.

You have rightly recognised the need to develop further the effectiveness of teaching assistants across the school. Despite leaders' efforts to improve the impact that teaching assistants have on pupils' learning across the school, this is not yet consistent. Leaders have appropriate plans in place to continue to address this issue.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and trustees ensure that all safeguarding arrangements, including those in the early years foundation stage, are fit for purpose. Records of the assurances taken to check the suitability of staff are thorough and adhere to statutory guidelines. Staff receive training on how to keep pupils safe from a range of specific safeguarding issues, including child sexual exploitation, and are aware of the signs to look out for that may suggest a pupil is at risk of harm. You and your deputy designated safeguarding leads work closely together with families and external agencies to support vulnerable pupils.

All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, confirmed that they feel children are safe at school and well looked after. Results from staff and pupil surveys mirrored this view.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we agreed to look at the effectiveness of safeguarding; trustees' impact on improving disadvantaged pupils' outcomes; how effectively leaders' actions are in improving pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and spelling; and how leaders are ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is leading to improved outcomes for pupils, particularly girls and the most able pupils.
- Trustees have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They conduct regular visits and scrutinise information provided by school leaders. Trustees use their in-depth knowledge of the school's performance to hold leaders scrupulously to account for pupils' outcomes. For example, trustees review the school's progress information to assure themselves that any additional funding is having a positive impact on disadvantaged pupils' outcomes. They are

clear that the achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is diminishing in English and mathematics. The school's internal data and pupils' work confirm this.

- Although pupils' writing outcomes in 2017 improved on 2016 results, leaders recognise that the achievement pupils make in writing needs to be better. Classroom visits and current pupils' work show that the standard of writing across the school is improving. Pupils have the opportunity to write for extended periods, and this is contributing to their progress, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those in key stage 2.
- You have taken a series of initiatives to improve the quality of teaching in spelling, for example, through changes to the structure of spelling sessions and increased training for staff from a neighbouring local authority. As a result, pupils' outcomes in spelling are improving rapidly. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about the strategies they use when spelling unfamiliar words and are confident that their spelling is advancing.
- Despite a dip in pupils' reading attainment in 2017, current pupils are making good progress in their reading. Leaders have developed an effective reward system to encourage pupils to read beyond their set homework times. Pupils respond well to this and are keen to reach their targets and achieve. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm to the inspector about the plethora of opportunities that they have to read at school. They appreciate the wide range of books that are available in the school library and are knowledgeable about popular authors and genres of books.
- Pupils use a variety of mathematical vocabulary accurately in their work, and most pupils make good progress in their application of mathematics and problem-solving skills. Any previous discrepancies in the achievement of particular groups of pupils have disappeared. This is because teachers question pupils effectively, consolidating their knowledge and developing their thinking skills, particularly in key stage 2. Most pupils feel that they are regularly challenged in their work, which is evident in their books. They talked confidently about how their mathematical skills have improved.
- Leaders identify that the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics still needs to improve in key stage 1. A well-thought-through action plan to develop pupils' reasoning skills is in place across the school. However, not all learning activities precisely meet the individual needs of pupils. Consequently, not all pupils make the progress that they are capable of in the subject.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching in mathematics at key stage 1 enables all pupils to make consistently strong progress from their individual starting points
- leaders' efforts to close the gap between disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and those of their peers continue to be effective.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for West Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Emma Sanderson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you at the start of the day, discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and agreed the key areas I would focus on during the inspection. During the day, I held further discussions with you and members of your senior leadership team. I met with the chair of the trust and two trustees. I observed learning in a number of lessons and scrutinised pupils' work with your inclusion leader. I took account of 36 staff survey responses, 104 pupil survey responses and 47 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I spoke with staff and pupils throughout the day. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' checks on pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and learning, and safeguarding policies and procedures.