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Glen Golding  
Executive Headteacher  
Bishopswood Junior School  
Barlows Road  
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Hampshire  
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Dear Mr Golding

### **Short inspection of Bishopswood Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 24 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 the school was judged to be good in November 2014.

#### **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 ambitious, clear and knowledgeable leadership, sharply focused on school improvement. You are highly respected by the whole community. As a result, officers from your local authority use your expertise to support other local schools to improve further. You have a clear vision for the school and the federation. Your collaborative approach to leadership ensures that all staff share this vision. Morale at this school is high. You place a strong emphasis on professional development for all staff and, as a result, teaching is highly effective.

Parents appreciate how welcoming the school is. They say that your staff are always accessible and willing to listen. On the day of my visit, parents were enjoying a polished gymnastic display. The previous day, parents had also had the opportunity to attend a Roman banquet. Events like this are frequent and, as a result, parents feel involved in their child's learning. One parent wrote, 'Fantastic school, brilliant teachers, outstanding leadership team. I cannot recommend the school enough.'

Pupils enjoy attending Bishopswood Junior School and they behave well. Relationships are strong. The pupils like many things about school life, including abseiling on the recent residential trip and the regular opportunities they have to carry out science investigations. They were also keen to tell me about the sporting opportunities they have, including winning a local football tournament that week.

The previous inspection report highlighted the school's many strengths, including

good progress and effective support for disadvantaged pupils. You have maintained these strengths. In Year 6 in 2017, disadvantaged pupils made more progress than other pupils nationally, in reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, the progress that Year 6 pupils made in mathematics in 2017 was above that seen nationally. At the last inspection, leaders were asked to raise standards in writing in the school. Your actions to address this have been effective in English lessons. Leaders acknowledge, however, that opportunities to write to a high standard across the wider curriculum are limited.

The previous inspection report also asked senior leaders to develop the role of middle leaders. You have built a strong group of leaders around you, who have the skills and knowledge to drive forward improvements at a pace.

You, leaders and governors have an accurate and reflective view of the school's strengths and priorities. Because of your high expectations, you have identified that there is capacity to improve specific aspects of the teaching of mathematics even further. Leaders also acknowledge that they do not track the progress different groups are making across the school closely enough.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Day-to-day routines are secure. Any necessary actions are completed without delay and are followed up in an efficient manner. Leaders make sure that there is timely, ongoing training for staff and governors so that they know how to keep pupils safe. The designated safeguarding leads work successfully with local agencies to be sure that the needs of pupils and their families are addressed effectively. Staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire unanimously agreed that pupils are kept safe at the school.

During the inspection, I identified a discrepancy in the single central record. This oversight was addressed immediately, demonstrating leaders' and administrators' commitment to meeting statutory requirements.

Attendance figures have been below the national average for primary schools in recent years, and the proportion of pupils frequently absent has been high. Despite a slight improving picture, leaders acknowledge that ensuring that all pupils attend school regularly is a continual focus for the school.

In the past, the proportion of pupils who have received a fixed-term exclusion has been above that typically seen in primary schools. The rate of exclusion is now dropping due to strong relationships with parents and pupils, as well as improved understanding of barriers to learning. Exclusion is used only as a last resort.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of what bullying is. They say that there is 'not much bullying' in the school and that teachers are 'good at sorting it out' when it does happen. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online.

## Inspection findings

- In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in writing by the end of key stage 2 was below the national average. This was also true of the proportion of these pupils who met the expected standard in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test. You have put in place a number of relevant improvements to enhance writing provision and, as a result, the teaching of writing is strong. Effective professional development, including in phonics, has resulted in highly skilled teachers with strong subject knowledge. They provide pupils with high-quality models to improve standards in writing, resulting in pupils being very clear about what is expected of them. Pupils' word choices are ambitious. Leaders have also successfully introduced a more structured approach to the teaching of spelling. A handwriting reward scheme, including the ability to 'win' and then write with a 'golden pencil', has resulted in the standards of presentation and handwriting being high. Pupils take great pride in their writing. You recognise, however, that the impact of your work to improve the quality of writing in the school has yet to be seen in lessons other than English.
- Leaders have reviewed how reading is taught in the school and lessons now focus sharply on improving specific reading comprehension skills. This has resulted in improved standards. Observations of pupils' reading, scrutiny of pupils' books and information shared by leaders indicate that current pupils across the school are making good progress in their reading. Disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress in reading to their classmates. The most-able pupils are stretched effectively, through challenging questions. For example, in a Year 5 reading lesson, I observed a group of pupils working collaboratively to identify words that conveyed positivity and negativity within a poem. As one pupil said to me, 'We want to have a challenge.' The learning needs of lower-attaining pupils are also supported well. Pupils' enjoyment in reading lessons was clear to see. They know the importance of reading and are committed to reading 'at least three times a week'.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching in the school. You take every opportunity to ensure that the strong skills of your highly effective teachers are shared to strengthen teaching even further. Your school improvement planning shows that, despite high results in mathematics, you are not complacent. Leaders are aware that increasing opportunities for pupils to reason in their mathematics lessons, and improving pupils' instant recall of multiplication tables, will further improve standards in this area. Your focus on developing the quality of your leadership team has been highly successful. There is a shared accountability for ensuring that all pupils achieve as highly as possible. As one senior leader said, 'Every child, every lesson, counts.' Governors carry out a range of activities to help them to know how well the school is doing. This includes talking to pupils to verify what they are being told. They ensure that the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is deployed appropriately. However, the information given to governors currently does not provide enough opportunities for them to understand the progress different groups are making in the school. This restricts governors in challenging leaders.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- rates of attendance match or exceed national averages for primary schools, with a sharp focus on those who are regularly absent
- the standard of writing across the curriculum is of the same high standard as that seen in English lessons
- teachers provide activities that develop pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics and improve their instant recall of multiplication tables
- governors have the information they need to challenge leaders effectively.

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

Yours sincerely

Lea Hannam  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and your two executive deputy headteachers to discuss the school's effectiveness. You accompanied me on visits to lessons to observe pupils' learning, talk to pupils and look at their work. Together, we looked at the quality of pupils' work in books. I considered 26 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and their free-text comments. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. I also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority and met with middle leaders responsible for the curriculum and English. Responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires were also considered. I met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body, and formally spoke to a group of pupils about their school. I evaluated the school's safeguarding arrangements. A wide range of documents was examined, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement planning, pupils' progress information and various school policies.