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Mr Andrew Bainbridge
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Bainbridge

Short inspection of Bernard Gilpin Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 May 2019, 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 second short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in July 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Leadership is highly effective. You lead the school with a determined vision for excellence, with high expectations of all pupils, regardless of their starting points. You have further developed other senior and middle leaders since the previous inspection. Together, leaders at all levels continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is highly effective. All leaders, staff and governors share the view that the school motto, 'dream, believe, achieve', is central to the aspirational culture that you have set for the school. Consequently, pupils have confidence in their own abilities to develop academically, personally and socially. Some pupils shared their high aspirations for future careers, which included training to be a vet, a footballer, a solicitor, a dancer or a doctor.

Pupils are extremely proud to attend their school. They wear their uniform with great pride, concentrate well in lessons, display excellent conduct around school and exhibit positive attitudes on the playground. They are polite and respectful towards each other, adults and visitors to the school. Pupils say that they are most proud of their achievements, of challenges they overcome, and of the hard work they put into their learning. All pupils that I spoke to, during the inspection, said

that they enjoyed learning. They talked zealously about the educational visits, the wide range of sports available and the opportunity to learn an instrument or perform in a musical performance. Pupils are proud of the teamwork and the support that they provide for one another, saying that everyone is valued. One pupil said: 'Everyone is welcomed in this school, no matter what your background, faith or family. Everyone is equal.'

The vast majority of parents and carers are very positive about the school. Parents describe the school as: '100% inclusive' with 'high standards of behaviour and attainment' and 'extremely approachable leaders and staff'. Many parents gave high praise for staff, stating that they 'go over and beyond' their duties to support their children. One parent commented: 'From the moment my child started at this school, it has felt that she is part of more than just a school, but part of a family.'

You place high priority on offering an enriching curriculum to provide a range of experiences for pupils. Pupils talked maturely about everyone having a chance to be a classroom monitor so that all pupils develop a sense of responsibility. They also understand the difference they can make to others in the community when they participate in the school's dementia café. Many parents commented positively on the large number of educational visits that are provided for pupils, as part of the curriculum, such as residential visits, skiing and visits to castles, places of worship, museums and theatres. This supports pupils to apply the skills they learn in school to real-life experience. For example, a visit to a local airport resulted in pupils applying mathematical skills and knowledge when calculating the mathematical differences between arrival and departure times of flights. They also applied geographical knowledge by identifying human and geographical features on their journey to and from the airport.

You have dealt effectively with the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. You were asked to ensure that pupils' understanding and awareness of all forms of bullying matched that of cyber bullying. This has been achieved. Pupils know what constitutes bullying and have a detailed awareness of how to recognise and deal with it, should it occur. You were also asked to ensure that the safeguarding culture of the school was more accurately reflected in documents made accessible to parents. The school's website now includes a variety of policies, information and hyperlinks related to safeguarding which parents can access. There are also related information leaflets and posters around the school environment. Many parents say that they find the information relating to safeguarding easy to locate and understand.

You were also asked to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, particularly the most able disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1, and you have tackled this successfully. You, and other leaders, carried out a planned review to evaluate the difference that funding for disadvantaged pupils was making. Your detailed plans identify any barriers to learning as well as specific support for this group of pupils. As a result, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils attaining the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 has increased over three years to be above other pupils nationally in 2018.

Governors have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and its areas for development. They are knowledgeable about their legal duties and responsibilities because they make sure that they access up-to-date and relevant training through the local authority. They check carefully on difference made through the spending of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. They check regularly that pupils' attendance remains above the national average. They share your high expectations for all pupils and make sure that leaders' actions are making a positive difference to outcomes for all pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Together, you have created a strong culture of safeguarding because you and your staff want the school to be a secure and safe place to learn. You have ensured that safeguarding is given the highest priority in school and that all staff are aware that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The designated safeguarding lead has established a systematic approach to identifying and recording concerns about pupils, which staff understand and follow.

Leaders have developed strong relationships with pupils and families who face challenging circumstances. Case studies considered during the inspection show that your designated safeguarding lead is tenacious in his approach. He works closely with external agencies and a range of professionals to ensure that appropriate and timely support is provided for vulnerable pupils and their families. The curriculum includes activities to support vulnerable pupils such as yoga, relaxing techniques and activities to promote positive mental health.

All of the pupils I spoke to during the inspection said that they feel safe in school. They talk with confidence about how they are taught to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. All pupils say that bullying is not a problem and if it did occur, they know that teachers would sort it out quickly. The vast majority of parents who shared their views state that their children feel safe in school. One parent stated: 'I feel like children's welfare is paramount and safeguarding is second to none at this school.'

Inspection findings

- The high standards achieved by pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, at the end of every key stage is a significant strength of the school. Over the past three years, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected and higher standards at the end of Reception, key stage 1 and key stage 2 has been above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screen has also been above the national average for three years. Pupils' progress across key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has been at least above the national average for three years. In 2018, progress in all three subjects was well above average for all pupils.
- I spent time looking at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in

lessons, with you, to check on how this has led to the improving trend in outcomes since the last inspection. We agreed that the quality of teaching in lessons and learning over time in pupils' workbooks are significant strengths of the school. Leaders evaluate the strengths and areas to develop for each teacher, year group and subject.

- In Year 6 in 2018, the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) across key stage 2 was well above average for mathematics but in the average range for reading and writing. The proportion attaining the expected and higher standard in mathematics was also above the national averages and stronger than in other subjects. I wanted to see how well you, and other leaders and staff provide for this group of pupils. Inspection evidence shows that the strong, inclusive culture that exists within the school ensures that pupils with SEND have the same opportunities as other pupils, to engage in all aspects of school life. The leader of SEND has established thorough systems to check on the progress made by pupils with SEND. Adults support pupils effectively in lessons and targeted resources are matched well to pupils' needs and abilities. Work in books for current pupils with SEND indicates good progress, particularly in mathematics. However, further work is needed to ensure that pupils with SEND make stronger progress in their reading and writing so that their attainment and progress made at the end of key stage 2 matches the standards they attain in mathematics.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their attendance, which has been above the national average for the past three years and continues to improve. You place high priority on pupils having high attendance and ensuring that any pupil absences are checked out to make sure that children are safe. Pupils say that they want to attend school regularly because they do not want to miss out on their learning and being with their friends every day.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils with SEND make stronger progress in reading and writing, so that the attainment and progress made by the end of key stage 2 improves to be closer to the national average and closer to the standards they reach in 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 Sunderland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alison Aitchison
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, senior leaders, staff, governors and the school improvement officer from the local authority. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. I spoke with pupils in the playground, in lessons and met formally with a group of pupils to discuss their views of the school and attitudes to learning. Together with you, I made visits to classrooms to observe pupils' learning across the school. I looked at pupils' work in their classrooms and considered the progress evident in a selection of pupils' workbooks. I scrutinised school documents, including the child protection and safeguarding records, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation document. I took account of 75 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including parents' free-text responses.