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11 December 2018

Miss Beverley Donald  
Executive Headteacher  
Burley Gate CofE Primary School  
Burley Gate  
Hereford  
Herefordshire  
HR1 3QR

Dear Miss Donald,

### **Short inspection of Burley Gate CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 December 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 2013.

#### **The school continues to be good.**

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

Your leadership is decisive and uncompromising. You have successfully created a united family of pupils, staff, governors and parents who demonstrate high levels of mutual respect. You are determined to overcome challenges and you diligently pursue improvements wherever they are required. You have unambiguously communicated your expectations that staff must identify individual pupil's strengths, gifts and needs to ensure pupils' success and well-being. Adults' knowledge of individual pupils is a strength of the school and, consequently, pupils feel valued.

Leaders and staff work hard to provide pupils of all ages with purposeful and stimulating learning experiences. Subjects are taught imaginatively to engage pupils' interest, broaden their knowledge, deepen their understanding and develop their skills. Staff are committed to providing a rich range of additional activities, such as the forest school, educational visits, visitors to school and extensive sport and artistic events.

Pupils are proud to be a part of Burley Gate. They speak enthusiastically about how kind pupils and adults are. They appreciate what everyone does for them. As one pupil explained, 'Teachers help us to fulfil our potential and help us if we struggle but they always make sure our work isn't too easy.' In lessons, pupils understand what is expected of them. They make good use of the shared success criteria to guide their efforts and check how well they are completing any given task. As a

result, they are increasingly responsible for the quality and accuracy of their work. Pupils understand that individuals are different and that some 'have good and bad days'. Nevertheless, they are sufficiently mature to share responsibility and care for each other. They thrive on the compliments they receive about their excellent behaviour when on educational visits or joining in sports tournaments with other schools.

The school has undergone significant changes since its previous inspection. In 2016 the school became part of the Bishop Anthony Educational Trust (BAET). In 2017 you were invited to lead another local primary school within the trust, in partnership with Burley Gate. You are now the executive headteacher of both schools. The governing bodies from both schools combined but the two chairs of the governing bodies retained their positions to provide some continuity at a time of significant change. The current deputy headteacher was appointed in 2017.

School leaders, including governors, believe that the BAET knows the school's relative strengths and areas for further development. The trust monitors the school's progress and has provided suitable expertise to bring about ongoing improvements. You appreciate the termly visits from the school improvement partner to provide external evaluations of aspects of the school's work. Leaders and governors agree that since joining the BAET, schools share an increased optimism about the future. You have seized opportunities to work collaboratively with other trust schools and share training for staff and governors. Leaders are clear about the structure of responsibilities and individual roles within the BAET.

Since the section 5 inspection in 2013, you have introduced a range of mathematical resources. The equipment helps pupils to demonstrate mathematical concepts in practical ways. As a result, they can explain and deepen their understanding while extending their ability to reason mathematically. Pupils explained how they applied practical mathematical skills when working in the forest school or going about other tasks, such as gardening or baking. Pupils are aware of the increased challenge expected of them when completing tasks in any subject. In addition, pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves and each other. Pupils take a pride in their responsibilities which spread across a range of opportunities, such as serving on the school council, helping to supervise games at playtimes and organising competitions for each other.

Leaders, including governors, have introduced clear and measurable targets for staff appraisals which are closely linked with pupils' rates of progress. All adults know their responsibilities and are keen to succeed. The targets are realistic and carefully consider the individual nature of each pupil cohort. You work closely with staff and governors to evaluate how well the school is doing and encourage ambitious ideas for continued development. Leaders and staff have identified clear, justifiable priorities for ongoing improvement based on accurate and honest evaluations of the school's work. Staff have identified a range of opportunities for pupils to understand Britain's multi-cultural society and sensitively explore similarities and differences.

## **Safeguarding is effective**

In my discussions with pupils, they said that they feel safe at school. A typical pupil comment was, 'If we're unhappy about anything we can talk to a teacher and they will listen to us.' Staff know each individual pupil and demonstrate high levels of care for pupils' well-being. Staff are well informed about safeguarding procedures and have regular opportunities to update their knowledge or discuss concerns.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is suitably trained and provides staff with ongoing advice and relevant updates. Consequently, staff identify and record well-informed concerns so that necessary action can be taken. The DSL maintains good communication with external support agencies so that she can keep track of ongoing support and consider the relevance of actions taken. All related policies and procedures reflect up-to-date guidance. Appropriate recruitment checks are carried out for staff, volunteers and governors.

## **Inspection findings**

- Almost all of the children achieved a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year in 2018. Staff liaise closely with the nearby pre-school providers to ensure that they have a good level of knowledge of children and their needs from the first day children start school. On children's entry to Reception, staff quickly identify children's abilities against the expectations for their age. They lose no time in providing the necessary support to ensure children make good progress from their starting points.
- The very small numbers in each cohort of pupils means that statistical comparisons with national figures are unviable. Most pupils achieved the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2018 as in previous years. Phonics is taught well, and pupils go on to be good readers.
- Almost all pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Years 2 and 6. However, apart from reading, not many pupils make good enough progress to achieve the higher standards. You have identified this area of work as a current priority for improvement. You have introduced a new system for recording teachers' assessments of pupils' progress which is regularly updated and checked. Staff are increasingly aware of what pupils need to know, understand and do to achieve the higher standards. Leaders and teachers regularly monitor pupils' progress and take swift action if pupils are identified as being in danger of falling behind or having gaps in their knowledge.
- Teachers are developing greater confidence in planning the necessary learning steps associated with age-related standards in writing. Teachers are adept at assessing how well any pupil has grasped new writing skills and modifying future lesson plans accordingly. Pupils' books show that they take great care to present their work neatly and they practise the writing styles that are appropriate for their age. They learn and adopt correct subject-specific vocabulary when answering questions or explaining their methods and correctly apply them to their written work. Pupils confidently use dictionaries and a thesaurus to enrich their writing. Pupils know what is expected of them in any given task and

consequently they accurately check their own work and that of others.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all staff continue to develop their awareness of what pupils need to know, understand and do to achieve the higher standards in writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the chair of the governing body, the academies effectiveness officer and a group of pupils. We observed lessons together and looked at pupils' work. I took account of the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement and the minutes of recent governing body meetings. I considered pupils' standards of attainment and rates of progress. I read various school policies and curriculum plans.