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Mrs Rebecca Mills
Headteacher
Baston CE Primary School
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Dear Mrs Mills

Short inspection of Baston CE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 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 March 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 and the leadership team have ensured that you are up to date with any changes in education. You have developed an assessment system to track the progress that pupils make, and are using this well to hold teachers to account. This is working well in key stage 2. You have developed the curriculum to provide pupils with a wide range of learning opportunities and, where possible, take learning outside of the classroom utilising your forest school area.

You and the leadership team are keen to develop the skills of your teaching staff. You actively encourage staff to review their own practice frequently, and to reflect on their teaching. You have tailored professional development to meet the specific needs of the staff as well as to support whole-school priorities. Staff value the training they receive and believe it is purposeful and helps them to develop their practice.

In the last inspection report, you were asked to ensure that pupils' writing in different subjects is the same quality as it is in English. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils are given opportunities to write across the curriculum and in a range of genres. Skills that pupils develop in English and grammar lessons are carried across into other areas of the curriculum. The broad and balanced curriculum provides stimulus for different types of writing such as descriptions of the Great Fire of London.

You were also asked to involve children in the early years in knowing how well they have done and what they need to do to improve further. In phonics, writing and mathematics, pupils receive instant feedback in how to improve their work. The link between home and school has been strengthened using an online assessment tool. Parents and carers can see what their children have achieved at school, and can add developments that have taken place at home. Using this tool, teachers identify what children could do to improve and parents are encouraged to discuss this with their children.

The last inspection report also asked you to ensure that leaders at all levels use assessment information to plan for improvements in pupils' progress. Leaders have developed a new system for tracking pupils' progress. Leaders track pupils' progress and attainment, and use this information regularly to challenge teachers during pupil progress meetings. Teachers use assessment information to ensure that tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities, and provide appropriate challenge.

Teaching remains strong. The teaching of phonics, however, is inconsistent. The expectations of the progress pupils make between the early years and key stage 1 are not high enough. Leaders are not using assessment information well enough in key stage 1 to monitor carefully the progress pupils are making. This means some pupils do not make the progress they should.

Staff feel valued by leaders. They are proud to be part of the school and feel that it has improved since the last inspection. Subject leaders have a secure understanding of the areas for development in their subject and the improvements they need to make. They are fully involved with the evaluation of assessment information, and use this well to set priorities for their subject.

Overall, parents are very positive about the work of the school. They feel that pupils are well cared for and that staff are available if they have a problem. Some parents that I spoke with said that staff are supportive of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. These parents said that staff are diligent in ensuring that pupils receive the right support to enable them to make progress.

Pupils are proud to be part of the school. Pupils enjoy taking part in many sporting activities and strive to become a sporting ambassador, planning and participating in sporting events. Pupils have a good understanding of different religions. They know about the similarities and differences between religions, with one pupil saying, 'We do some of the same things, but in different ways.' You have ensured that pupils learn about different cultures. The house system is named after the seven continents and classes are named by different countries. The countries and continents are used as a focus for culture days when each house comes together to learn more about their respective countries.

Pupils strive to be awarded the star of the week, and look forward to going to tea with the headteacher. They appreciate that they may also be awarded a 'well done'

certificate if they have overcome a particular challenge. Pupils understand the school's values and how following the values will help them to be good people. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. The school's focus on internet safety has ensured that pupils have a good understanding of the dangers they may face online, including when using online games or on social media. Pupils know what to do if they are stuck, and whom they can talk to if they have a problem.

The chair of the governing body is determined to ensure that governors' skills are utilised well to provide the best possible support and challenge to leaders. Governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They regularly visit the school to verify what the leadership team reports. Governors received relevant training to ensure that they are able to provide effective challenge to leaders.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You and the deputy designated safeguarding lead have a secure understanding of the safeguarding concerns at the school. You are diligent in providing staff, governors and volunteers with up-to-date training in how to spot the signs of different forms of abuse. Well-maintained records are kept securely. The staff I spoke with, including lunchtime staff, know how to pass on any concerns they may have. They are particularly aware of the vulnerability of pupils online, and the possible dangers that pupils may face. The safeguarding governor has an excellent understanding of safeguarding procedures at the school. Leaders and governors are committed to providing 'best practice not minimum practice' when it comes to ensuring that pupils are kept safe.

Inspection findings

- You have identified that the attainment and progress pupils made at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was lower than in 2016. Your analysis of pupil progress information shows that the 2016 cohort was a particularly high-achieving group of pupils, who made good progress across the school. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2017, pupils did not make as much progress in reading. You have restructured the curriculum for reading to provide pupils with focused guided reading lessons, using quality texts as a stimulus. Leaders are carefully tracking the progress that pupils make in reading, and through regular meetings with teachers, pupils' progress is carefully monitored. Your own assessment information shows that pupils are making secure progress in reading across the school.
- Leaders track carefully the teaching of pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and emotional education. You and the leadership team are determined to ensure that the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures, faiths and lifestyles. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and includes significant events from British and global history. Pupils are developing their understanding of what it is to be a global citizen through the school's focus on

the different countries linked to the house points system.

- Some pupils do not make as much progress as they should in phonics. You have recently reorganised the assessment of phonics. Teachers carry out checks on what pupils know more regularly, and to move pupils on faster. The teaching of phonics, however, is inconsistent. In some phonics lessons, pupils are not taught using the pure sound. Pupils confuse sounds as they do not have a secure grasp of the correct phoneme. As a result, pupils use the incorrect sound when spelling unfamiliar words, or when identifying sounds.
- The progress that pupils make between the early years and key stage 1 is inconsistent. Leaders have not fully recognised the link between attainment at the end of the early years and the progress pupils should be making across key stage 1. Leaders have not tracked carefully enough the progress pupils make from their attainment at the end of the early years. As a result, some pupils are not making as much progress as they should in key stage 1.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- adults model the sounds letters make accurately when teaching phonics, so that pupils get a secure grasp of early reading and spelling skills
- teachers and leaders use assessment information to monitor the progress that pupils make between the early years and key stage 1, so that they can swiftly provide extra help for any pupils at risk of underachieving.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the deputy headteacher. I held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and five other governors. I spoke with the school's business manager, the leader for mathematics, teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors. I met with seven pupils. You and I observed learning taking place during the morning, including phonics lessons, English and mathematics.

I scrutinised a selection of pupils' workbooks. I examined a range of the school's documentation, including its self-evaluation document, its improvement plan, the racist incidents log and documents relating to safeguarding.

I considered the view of parents by speaking with some of them before school. I also analysed the 49 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I considered the 27 responses to Ofsted's survey of staff.