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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Sue James
Headteacher
Becket Primary School
Monk Street
Derby
Derbyshire
DE22 3QB

Dear Mrs James

Short inspection of Becket Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 April 2017, 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 school was judged to be good in September 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Becket is a school with a warm, 'family feel' where pupils from a wide variety of different backgrounds and cultures are welcomed.

You work closely as a senior leadership team and your shared experience and mutual respect for each other sets the tone for the high professional standards of the Becket staff. Staff value being a part of the school and show great loyalty and pride in their work. For many, this spans several years.

School values embody the high-quality nurture and support which lie at the heart of your school. This ensures that your pupils feel cared for and provides a strong platform upon which to build for their future success. Your school is a very caring school, where pupils feel safe and every aspect of their personal development and welfare is given a high priority. Adults show great compassion and take the time to listen and make sure that every child's concerns are addressed. Parents' comments show the high value which many place on how the school develops and supports all pupils equally.

You expect your pupils to achieve well and this is communicated throughout the school. Pupils clearly enjoy learning and speak with confidence and enthusiasm about how teachers make lessons interesting. In every class, children are talking about their learning and there are high levels of involvement and engagement with the varied activities on offer.

Pupils are cooperative, polite and courteous and speak passionately about how they help others through their different roles as leaders themselves. School councillors especially mentioned their work in developing the 'code of conduct' and the youngest councillor commented, 'it just encourages you to do the right thing'. Pupils behave well and are keen learners.

You have addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection to raise the overall quality of teaching and learning and enhance the ways in which pupils learn. Changes to the curriculum and a clear initiative for pupils to talk about their learning and make more of their own decisions and choices in class are evident around the school. Teachers and leaders make good use of assessment information to plan activities which stretch and challenge individuals and groups of pupils. Many lessons include searching questions and research activities to extend pupils' thinking further. In science, pupils are expected to produce their own hypotheses and carry out practical activities to test these, reporting on their findings. Many activities in mathematics are structured so that pupils select their focus task and find their own method to solve it, ready to explain their thinking to others.

Your cohesive leadership team provides good support and encouragement for aspiring leaders in the school and you work proactively with other school leaders and with your improvement adviser from the local authority. You have made effective use of external advice to identify actions to improve pupils' achievements in writing, spelling and grammar so that more pupils reach and exceed the new higher expectations. Your team is quick to identify the need for a new approach and committed to finding the best fit for the Becket pupils. The high quality of pupils' writing and work displayed around the school shows that standards are improving. You have pinpointed the middle ability pupils as a key group in school and strategies are in place to accelerate their progress in all subjects.

Leaders continue to look closely at attendance for all pupils in the school and offer weekly challenges and rewards to raise and reinforce the importance of coming to school.

Governors have a deep-seated and insightful understanding of the school. Their wealth of experience of school governance and wider range of skills provides a sharp strategic focus on the future of the school. They have acted to implement changes to the 'Nurture' provision, placing the needs of Becket pupils at the forefront of all changes. The high-quality support and precision of the questions raised by governors ensure that you keep a sharp eye on current, key priorities to raise achievement further through each key stage.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors place a high priority on safeguarding and ensure that it is at the heart of all of the school's work. Detailed and thorough records are securely kept and routinely updated. Rigorous checks are made on staff suitability to work with children and governors' monitoring shows their excellent awareness of their

own statutory responsibilities. Your senior team of safeguarding leaders ensures that a senior member of staff is readily available, should a concern be raised. Staff training is kept up to date and new staff or any who have missed training events are quickly offered follow-up sessions run in school. This ensures that staff are confident in the systems used to raise concerns.

Pupils look after each other. Older pupils trained as peer mediators step in to resolve the disputes of others. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and understand how to keep themselves safe online and when using digital technologies. You run e-safety workshops for parents to make sure that every opportunity is taken to keep your pupils safe.

You know your pupils and their families well and are quick to act when concerns are raised. You provide carefully crafted support for the most vulnerable pupils and have well-established external support to call upon if needed.

Inspection findings

- Your leadership team and strong governing body share the same sharp focus on the current, key priorities to raise achievement further. The focus on writing and application of essential grammar is already making a positive difference. Pupils' writing is celebrated around the school and their books show how they set their own targets, make improvements and produce good-quality written work, which they are proud of. Regular spelling checks and established spelling homework are contributing to raising standards in spelling. New approaches in the way grammar is taught are having a positive impact on the quality of writing. Your assessment information shows that standards in writing are rising.
- You carefully monitor the progress of your middle ability pupils in the school and check how well they are achieving in each of their subjects. The astute direction of the learning mentor to work with the Year 6 middle ability group is making a positive difference. Your monitoring and progress checks show that more pupils than previously in Year 6 have already reached the expected standard in reading and writing.
- You are persistent in your drive to raise attendance in school, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils, and have a number of strategies in place to encourage this. You have rightly identified the individual pupils and groups who are most at risk and have involved the education welfare officer in working more closely with vulnerable families. You raise parents' awareness through induction information, newsletters and informal conversations to convey the importance of their children being in school. You have been successful in reducing the number of families whose children are persistently absent. However, this figure remains above the national average. Although attendance is slowly rising, it remains below the national figure and some of the most recent incentives are yet to demonstrate a wider impact on pupils' attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- attendance retains its high focus, the attendance of the school's most vulnerable pupils improves, so that few are persistently absent, and the school's overall attendance figure is at least in line with the national one.

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

Yours sincerely

Aune Turkson-Jones
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, we met regularly and, along with your assistant headteachers, observed teaching in several classes. We looked at pupils' work from different subjects and I spoke extensively to pupils about their work and experiences in school, throughout the day. I met with three members of the governing body, including the chair, and also met with your senior school improvement officer. The education welfare officer was in school and made himself available for a brief meeting with me. I spoke with a group of pupils who hold specific responsibilities and also listened to a pupil reading. Subject leaders were available to talk about their areas and what impact this is having on raising standards further, especially in writing. I reviewed records of checks on staff suitability to work with children, as well as records of recruitment. I spoke with parents outside school and during the open session in the early years unit. I took note of their views through a recent school survey and through the online survey Parent View. All of my discussions were focused around the lines of enquiry that were formed and agreed in order to test if the school remains good. I checked the effectiveness of safeguarding and what impact the school is having on the attendance of specific groups of pupils.