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Mr Kevin Day
Headteacher
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Warden Hill Road
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Dear Mr Day

Short inspection of Belmont School

Following my visit to the school on 4 October 2018 with Tracy French, Ofsted Inspector, 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 outstanding in October 2014.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your staff are relentless in your resolve to ensure that you provide the very best quality of education and care for your pupils. The adherence to the school's motto, 'To always be the best we can be', is palpable throughout the school. You and your staff have an absolute belief and determination that every child can and will succeed. Consequently, pupils thrive in this school. They make excellent progress from their often low starting points, both in their academic and personal development.

Under your inspirational leadership, the tremendously high-quality provision and outcomes for pupils have been sustained. The school remains forward looking, constantly looking for inventive ways to further improve education for pupils, both in your own school and others. For example, your 'in reach' work to support other schools in Gloucestershire is highly valued. Inspectors were told the support and guidance you provide are 'amazing'. This means you are able to share best practice and successfully support pupils in their learning beyond your own school.

There is no complacency in this school. Staff know and understand pupils' needs exceptionally well. Staff build fabulous relationships with pupils and their families. As a result, the improvements pupils make, both in their learning and socially, are impressive. Pupils describe how they are happy and enjoy their learning. Indeed,

parents told inspectors that their children wished they could come to school at weekends.

Most parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive and greatly appreciate the quality of education and care their children receive. Comments such as 'the school gives my child all the support he would ever need,' 'the leadership is fantastic and the teaching and learning outstanding' and 'Belmont is a fantastic school' are typical of the responses received.

Staff share your total dedication, ambition and drive to provide the very best for each pupil. They benefit from the high-quality training, coaching and mentoring that you and your leaders provide. This means that staff are highly skilled in providing pupils with the education and care that precisely meet their needs. You demonstrate a relentless drive for the continuous improvement of this outstanding school and are persistent in your determination to further raise pupils' achievements.

At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. These included: how the school makes sure pupils are safe, including how the school promotes regular attendance; the impact of leaders to ensure that pupils continue to receive an outstanding standard of education; how leaders have driven forward improvements in the quality of teaching and learning; and the effectiveness of assessment and planning to ensure that they meet the requirements as set out in pupils' education, health and care plans. These key lines of enquiry are considered below under 'Safeguarding' and 'Inspection findings'.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your staff and governors consider the safeguarding of pupils to be of the utmost importance. There is a shared understanding of the need to protect every pupil from all potential risks. Consequently, there is a strong culture of safeguarding that pervades the school. Staff receive high-quality training and frequent updates on keeping pupils safe. For example, staff have undertaken training on child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. This means that they are quickly able to spot concerns and take rapid action with confidence. Daily staff briefings provide further opportunities to share concerns and update colleagues on individual pupils when needed.

Leaders and governors fully understand the importance of recruiting safely. Therefore, all staff are carefully checked prior to starting employment to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.

Risk assessments are routinely undertaken. Leaders monitor these carefully and regularly to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. Individual pupil risk assessments are carefully linked to their education, health and care plans to ensure that they meet their specific needs. Furthermore, leaders work closely with a range of other external agencies. They do not hesitate to escalate their concerns when required. This minimises risk to pupils and helps keep them safe.

Relationships between staff and pupils are impressive. Consequently, pupils report that they are happy and feel safe because they trust the adults in school. Pupils describe how staff look after them and support them in tackling any worries or concerns they have. This helps reduce their anxiety and raise self-confidence.

You have worked hard to improve pupils' attendance, which continues to be above the national average. However, you quickly identified a sharp increase in the number of pupils with persistent absence and wasted no time in working with parents to tackle this. As a result, there has been a significant decrease in the number of pupils persistently absent from school.

Behaviour of pupils viewed during the inspection was exemplary. This is because you have clear expectations of behaviour which are understood by pupils. Pupils describe how they are taught to make the 'right choices'. Policies and procedures are securely in place to ensure that pupils have the support and guidance to behave well. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in the number of incidents of poor behaviour where pupils have needed to be restrained. Parents spoken to had no concerns regarding the behaviour of pupils and are confident that any squabbles are quickly sorted by staff.

Parents told inspectors they are confident their children are kept safe: 'Thank you Belmont for ensuring that my child is happy, safe, learning and building blocks to independence' being one such positive comment made.

Inspection findings

- 'An inspirational headteacher' is the view of the governors of your leadership. This is replicated by staff. You are unwavering in your desire to ensure that the school continues to be outstanding in the quality of education and care that pupils receive.
- You have exceptionally high expectations of yourself which are shared by your extremely skilled and highly motivated staff. Indeed, governors describe staff as 'professionally passionate'.
- Development planning is thorough and clearly reflects the school's accurate self-assessment of its performance and ambition for constant improvement. Leaders, governors and staff share the same vision. Governors demonstrate significant knowledge and expertise. This enables them to provide effective challenge and hold you and your leaders firmly to account.
- You are constantly striving to improve. You make effective use of your school improvement partner and invite other school leaders to visit Belmont and check that what you provide for pupils is as good as it can be.
- The only improvement point arising from the previous inspection was for leaders to use their monitoring to further improve the quality of teaching, and to ensure that learning starts promptly in lessons. You have done this successfully. Lessons

start punctually, with a clear focus on learning from the outset. This secures strong pupil progress.

- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently high. Leaders carefully monitor the quality of provision with rigour. You provide staff with high-quality guidance and support to ensure that their teaching meets your exacting standards. You act swiftly when teachers do not meet these expectations.
- Staff know the needs of pupils extremely well and, coupled with their impressive subject knowledge, plan activities which carefully meet their needs. This allows pupils to make strong progress and thrive. For example, younger pupils at the start of the school year found the sequencing of stories challenging. As a result of high-quality teaching, pupils are now confident in telling a story verbally and pictorially and are beginning to write short sentences.
- The curriculum excites and motivates pupils to learn well. The core skills of reading, writing and mathematics are carefully woven throughout the curriculum. For example, older pupils were excited about their work on war and conflict and were able to use their reading and writing skills to great effect. Of equal importance is the personal, social and health education of pupils. This work is securely embedded in all aspects of the school. This builds pupils' resilience and independence and raises their self-worth. Consequently, pupils develop positive attitudes and achieve well.
- Pupils' progress is carefully tracked lesson by lesson and day by day. Assessments of what each pupil can and cannot do are accurate. Teachers plan activities that precisely match the needs of the pupil as determined in their education, health and care plan. This means that every aspect of each pupil's development is carefully considered so that their needs are exceptionally well met.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they maintain their focus and drive for sustainable school improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Jen Southall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you and your leaders. Together, we talked about the improvements which have been made since the previous inspection. We observed the start of the day when pupils first arrive in school. We carried out learning walks through classes, accompanied by yourself and your senior leaders. We also held discussions with governors, heads of departments, staff, a local authority education adviser and your school improvement partner. Inspectors spoke informally with pupils throughout the inspection.

A wide range of documentation was looked at, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and information relating to pupils' current achievement and progress. Inspectors also checked the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

Inspectors spoke to parents during the day and took into account the 93 responses to the online survey, Parent View. They considered additional comments received from parents via the free-text message service.