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Dear Mrs Lomax

Short inspection of Belvedere Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 12 February 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 first short inspection carried out since Belvedere Junior School was judged to be good in January 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

You, your senior team, staff and governors provide a vibrant, happy and nurturing environment, which enables pupils to thrive. You use accurate evaluation of the school to build on areas of strength and bring about improvement. As a result, outcomes for pupils by the end of key stage 2 continue to be above national average. This is a school that wants to serve its community by providing the best opportunities for its children. Pupils benefit from a programme of trips, visits and visitors, which are intended to extend pupils' experiences and aspirations. You prepare pupils well for adult life by encouraging them to be positive and resilient at all times.

Parents, carers, pupils and staff feel confident that the school does everything it can to keep pupils safe. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds and are proud of the diversity in their school. They feel that 'nobody is left out' because staff ensure that everyone is valued and included. Pupils enjoy strong and positive relationships with adults and their peers. They behave well, are polite and appreciate the effort made by their teachers to ensure that they enjoy their learning.

The use of support systems within the family of trust schools is a strength. There is a strong culture of professional development and training that has underpinned the quality of teaching. All teachers have access to individual coaching, as well as training to improve or excel in their teaching practice. There is a directory of excellence within the trust that any member of staff can access to find examples of

strong practice. Staff retention is high, and new teachers are well supported. Governors and colleagues from the multi-academy trust know the school well and provide sharp challenge to enable you and your senior team to lead improvement.

Since the last inspection, leaders have focused on increasing teachers' expectations of the most able. There is evidence that this work has had a positive impact. Teachers plan and deliver lessons that provide challenge for these pupils and, as a result, they make strong progress. There has also been an improvement in the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation in books.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that arrangements for safeguarding are clear and fit for purpose. Leaders and governors understand their statutory responsibilities to keep pupils safe, and they maintain this as a high priority. Systems for staff recruitment, including relevant checks, are in place and the single central record is compliant. Records show that referrals to external agencies are appropriate, timely and followed up. All staff have signed to indicate that they understand the latest government guidance in terms of safeguarding children.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe online, at school and home through a programme of assemblies, visitors and as part of the curriculum. Leaders are sensitive to the risks to pupils in the local community and ensure that parents and pupils are given up-to-date safety information. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils receive support from external mentors around making correct life choices. Staff and governors are aware of safeguarding procedures through effective and regular training. If staff have a concern about a pupil, they know the correct action to take.

Inspection findings

- I first explored how leaders have addressed the progress pupils make in writing in subjects other than English. This was an area for improvement from the last inspection. Leaders have taken a whole-school approach. Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to undertake extended writing across the wider curriculum, such as humanities and science. As a result, they develop resilience in writing.
- The majority of pupils make at least good progress in writing. This is a result of consistently high expectations across all subjects for the quantity and quality of work. Teachers set high standards for handwriting, and presentation, spelling and grammar skills are taught regularly. Pupils reported that their handwriting and spelling are getting better as a result of teacher feedback, clear expectations and dedicated time to practise. Pupils' writing across subjects reflects the range of rich experiences and depth of knowledge that they receive across the curriculum.
- End of key stage 2 outcomes last academic year highlighted that progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) was weaker than for other pupils. I examined the impact of actions by leaders to improve outcomes for this group of pupils. Pupils targeted for SEND support receive effective teaching, and are well supported by additional adults. Their progress in mathematics and reading is in line with pupils nationally. They learn well over

time in a range of subjects. Staff support those who find managing their own behaviour challenging. This helps these pupils to self-regulate their behaviour in lessons and access the curriculum.

- Progress in writing for pupils with SEND is weaker than for other pupils. Their needs are not always identified prior to joining the school, and therefore leaders are not always aware of their starting points. Pupils with identified social, emotional and learning needs find it difficult to concentrate and write at length. Their progress in writing is weaker than in other subjects.
- Recent additional interventions, such as the nurture group, are in the early stages. Although there is some impact on pupils' well-being, there is insufficient evidence to support improvement in their writing skills.
- I also considered if pupils' attitudes to learning and their motivation had improved since the last inspection. I looked into how the quality of teaching and the curriculum helps pupils to be curious and excited about their learning.
- Pupils benefit from effective teaching across a range of subjects. Where subject knowledge is strongest, pupils' enthusiasm and curiosity go beyond the lesson. For example, they undertake good-quality research and projects at home. Pupils could explain the link between their everyday learning and their preparation for the future, and this helps to motivate them to learn.
- The teaching of science and, in particular, learning in the forest school and about computer science has a very positive impact on pupils' curiosity about the world around them. For example, Year 3 pupils were excited to design and test parachutes outdoors to demonstrate the impact of gravity on objects.
- Pupils are motivated, behave well and respond positively to the challenges set by their teachers.
- Lastly, I considered leaders' work to improve attendance. I focused on disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND because of their higher absence rates. Whole-school attendance is improving slowly as a result of leaders' actions, and is now broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent is reducing.
- The attendance team works well alongside the inclusion leader to ensure that there is an agreed approach for vulnerable pupils. Procedures to improve attendance have been recently reviewed, and the new education welfare officer is focused on improving attendance for targeted groups. There are strong systems to track pupils' attendance and identify those with poor attendance.
- There is a gap between the attendance of vulnerable groups and all pupils. This has an impact on their achievement at school. Too many of these pupils are also persistently absent. Leaders acknowledge this and agree that improvement in this area must continue to be a priority.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's work to reduce absence and persistent absence for pupils has a

rigorous focus on disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, to ensure that these pupils attend school as regularly as their peers.

- actions to improve progress in writing for those pupils with SEND are sustained and monitored so that these pupils' achievement in writing matches the achievement of their peers from the same starting points.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bexley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Karla Martin-Theodore
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other senior leaders and representatives of the governing body. I also met with the chief executive officer. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and the register of the checks made on staff. I visited lessons across the school with you and the deputy headteacher. We also looked at pupils' work in a range of subjects. I spoke to pupils and evaluated the views of 13 members of staff who completed the staff questionnaire and a few parents who completed Parent View.