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Mrs Anita Rogers
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Dear Mrs Rogers

Short inspection of Great Bradfords Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 13 December 2016, 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 September 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your positivity and enthusiasm is contagious, and is instilling in the school the energy and determination to move the school further on in its improvement journey.

Pupils are happy, content and achieving well at your school. Many pupils describe their experience at Great Bradfords Infant and Nursery School as 'amazing', 'perfect' or 'exciting.' One pupil exclaimed, 'I love learning! I always learn something in lessons that I didn't know before I went in.' Pupils speak articulately and enthusiastically about their work, and very clearly enjoy their learning. They believe that behaviour is very good at their school and are very confident that adults will look after them and deal with any problems, should they arise. Equally, parents are overwhelmingly positive about their child being happy at the school. One parent said, 'it is a fantastic school. Children are very happy, and my child always goes into school with a big smile on his face.'

The school environment is attractive and well maintained. The curriculum is exciting for pupils and it enables pupils to apply a wide range of skills across different subjects. Pupils' books, and inspiring displays, show that pupils are given many opportunities to learn and practise their basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. It is clear that they use these skills well in other subjects, such as history, art and science. The extensive outside areas provide pupils with plenty of

chances for creative, investigative work and play, whatever their age. Inside the school, displays serve to celebrate pupils' work, and also are a mark of their good progress. For example, in the Reception class there were examples of children's writing in September, and then displayed overlapping these was a more current piece of writing. This clearly shows children and parents how well the children are doing.

As a result of high expectations, and consistent application and reference by adults to the 'rocket rules' around the school, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. During social times, pupils play happily with each other and in lessons they work effectively together. Any low-level disruption is rare because pupils know the expectations and show that they understand the importance of concentrating, and trying hard with all their work. Pupils demonstrate the value that they place on their time in school, and the obvious pride they have in their work, through well-presented books and care for their environment.

Since joining the school in September 2016, you have secured a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision. You have also created a positive working relationship with staff, based on respect and high expectations of pupils. Staff feel well supported and empowered to try new and imaginative learning activities with pupils. The collaborative work with the local network of schools, particularly the neighbouring junior school, is helping teachers to build on their effective practice and improve their work. Curriculum leaders contribute effectively to the leadership of the school. However, you rightly acknowledge that more can be done to ensure that all subject areas are as developed as English and mathematics. As part of this work, curriculum leaders are working with the junior school leaders to further develop their own work and to share good practice.

In the previous inspection, school leaders were challenged to improve the outcomes for children in the early years. School leaders have been successful in achieving this and consequently outcomes at the end of the early years have improved since the previous inspection. In 2016 there was a very slight dip in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development. However, from their varied starting points, particularly in reading and writing, it is clear that children make consistently good progress. From when children first arrive at your school, your staff ensure that they check what children know and can do. Staff use this baseline to pinpoint early on what extra support children need to quicken the progress they make. As a result, teachers plan activities that meet pupils' various needs well. Consequently, pupils attain the expected standard for pupils of the same age nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

Reading is another area you are working hard to improve. You are developing the classroom reading areas to promote 'reading for pleasure'. Pupils say that they enjoy reading and their home-school reading records show that they read at home regularly, as well as in school. Pupils confidently have a go at reading and spelling unfamiliar words. They use effective strategies to help them and can define appropriate terminology to show a good understanding of the English language. For

example, one pupil reading pointed out the split digraph in the word 'cake'. When asked to explain, they said, 'A split digraph is when a long vowel sound is split, like the 'a' and the 'e' in cake, and the 'o' and 'e' in home.'

You recognise that there is still work to do. However, you have made good inroads as a result of already having identified the correct priorities to focus upon to continue to develop the school's work and further improve standards.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors give the highest priority to the safeguarding and well-being of pupils. The promoted culture of 'remember...if in doubt...ask' permeates throughout the school.

The school's record of checks on staff is well maintained. It evidences that leaders and governors ensure that the appropriate checks are made on all staff to determine their suitability to work with children. You and governors scrutinise documents to oversee the rigour of the checks being completed.

You ensure that records are detailed and you follow up any concerns about the pupils' safety and welfare tenaciously. Staff and governors' training in safeguarding is up to date. You ensure that this is regularly reviewed so that all staff have the very latest information. Consequently, all staff understand their role in ensuring that pupils are well cared for and looked after in school.

The safeguarding governor is knowledgeable and works closely with you, providing a good level of challenge and support to ensure that work to keep pupils safe meets current statutory requirements. Questions are continually asked to ensure rigour in the school's systems and processes.

School policies on child protection are thorough and followed precisely, meeting the most recent statutory expectations. There is no sense of complacency regarding any aspect of pupils' safety. The work of the family liaison officer and attendance officer provides high-quality support to families and vulnerable pupils.

Inspection findings

- Since you started at the school you have worked closely with the local authority. You have wasted no time in making the best use of their advice to make essential improvements to teaching and learning. Since September, you have instigated strategies in teaching to raise standards, especially for the most-able pupils. In the early years you have implemented planning to capitalise on children's own interests. Throughout the school, you have brought improvements to the training and delivery of reading, writing and spelling. As a result, the school's autumn half-termly assessment information shows that children, and pupils, are making good progress.
- You have also established a system to provide more challenge to drive up standards for the most-able pupils in the school. The work you are undertaking to raise the achievement of the most-able pupils reflects your acknowledgement

that not enough of those pupils who are capable of achieving the higher standards are yet doing so.

- There is a focus on improving the teaching of writing across the school to raise standards further. Children's attainment in writing, in both the Nursery and Reception classes, is improving because teachers are increasingly providing children with more opportunities to write and use their understanding of phonics throughout the day. Equally, there are now more opportunities for pupils to undertake extended writing, and rehearse and apply their learned skills using grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately. Consequently, current information and evidence of children's and pupils' work shows that they are making good progress in their writing.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 that achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check was larger than the proportion nationally. This has been the case for the last two years. For those pupils, this represents good progress from their starting points. This, together with your monitoring information, demonstrates that the teaching of early reading skills is effective.
- Pupils' books in all year groups show that, over time, mathematics teaching is effective. Pupils are developing a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts as a result. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils demonstrated a deeper understanding following the teacher's skilful intervention and questioning. The teacher looked at their work and said, 'Now prove it.' Pupils keenly proceeded to prove the validity of their answers and explain their reasoning articulately.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive targeted support to ensure that they can access the learning activities provided for them. Teachers plan pupils' next steps for them effectively. Consequently, these pupils make good progress from their various starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Leaders ensure that they identify any issues that pupils are facing and support them in being able to access the work. Where it is needed, play therapy and speech and language expertise is provided by additional adults and through bespoke training for staff. You are developing teachers' practice to provide more challenge for the most-able pupils in general. However, not enough most-able pupils who are also disadvantaged achieve the higher standards they are capable of.
- Pupils attend school regularly. They enjoy the challenge of looking after 'Attendance Ted' for the week if their class attendance is the highest. You work closely with families where attendance is an issue. As a result, attendance is in line with the national average, and persistent absence is below average.
- Most governors are knowledgeable and highly effective in supporting and challenging you and other leaders to continue to raise standards in achievement, behaviour and safeguarding. However, at times, not all governors contribute as effectively as they could.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they ensure that all governors contribute equally, and all governors are given sufficient opportunities to be as effective as the best

- the training for subject leaders develops their ability to monitor and support all subjects as well as that of reading, writing and mathematics
- teachers provide more opportunities that deepen the knowledge and skills of the most-able pupils, including the disadvantaged most-able pupils, even further, so that more of these pupils achieve the higher standards they are capable of.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracy Fielding
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I was able to discuss the work of the school with you and the deputy headteacher. We visited classrooms together to observe teaching and learning. I took the opportunity to look at pupils' work in books, and to speak with pupils throughout the day. I also held a meeting with a group of Year 2 pupils, and listened to some Year 1 pupils read. Discussions with a representative of the local authority and two members of the governing body helped to provide additional information. School documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website were also taken into account. I looked at the 25 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to gather parents' views and I also took into account the 27 texts from parents using the Ofsted free-text service. The views of 28 pupils and 33 staff were also gathered through the online questionnaires.

This short inspection focused on:

- the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements
- how leaders are sustaining and improving good provision to continue to secure good outcomes for children and pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, in reading, writing and mathematics
- the capacity of leadership with the recent change in headship
- assessing what the quality of teaching and learning is like over time, particularly in the early years, and in reading and writing across the school.