

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Karen Brass  
Headteacher  
Milking Bank Primary School  
Aintree Way  
Milking Bank  
Dudley  
West Midlands  
DY1 2SL

Dear Karen Brass

### **Short inspection of Milking Bank Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 November 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 the school was judged to be good in May 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

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

Your arrival in September 2017 has brought a renewed vibrancy and excitement to the school. Pupils, staff and parents speak highly of your appointment and the changes you have already implemented. In a very short space of time, you have effectively developed a strong and determined leadership team that shares your passion and vision for school improvement.

You have created a welcoming and friendly environment within which pupils enjoy learning. They behave well around school and in lessons. They are courteous and friendly to each other and visitors. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are positive, and pupils thrive well. There is an inclusive ethos in school. Pupils talk with pride about being a rights respecting school and about the importance of treating others, from all backgrounds, equally. They are developing strong values that prepare them well to be responsible British citizens.

The school's previous inspection report judged the school to be good with some outstanding features. These include pupils' attitude to learning and their relationships with each other. These features remain strong throughout school.

All parents I spoke to in the playground said that communication is good and their

children are happy at school. They all said that they would recommend the school to other parents. The majority of the results from the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, agreed with this.

The last inspection report identified the need to share outstanding practice across school in order to improve the quality of teaching. There have been some changes in teaching staff since the last inspection. However, you have put structures in place which allow phase leaders to facilitate the development of teachers in their phase group. Teachers have observed good practice within the school setting and have clear actions for self-improvement. However, you recognise that these changes are in their infancy and there is still a need to improve the consistency of the quality of teaching throughout school.

The better use of pupil premium funding was also a recommendation for improvement made by the previous inspection report. An allocated member of staff now takes the lead for pupil premium, and more rigorous tracking systems have been put in place. As a result, pupil premium pupils are making good progress from their starting points. However, while progress may be good, attainment is still low compared to that of other pupils in school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. School staff are up to date with safeguarding training and know the actions to take if they have concerns about a child's well-being. All parents that answered the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, said that they feel that their child is safe at school. Systems for monitoring both staff and pupil usage of the internet are in place and any concerns are swiftly addressed.

Pupils can talk confidently about how to keep safe on the internet and the use of mobile phones. Personal, social and health education lessons teach pupils about the impact of bullying, and pupils can discuss what bullying is and what to do if they think that someone is being bullied.

Leaders respond decisively, where necessary, to ensure that arrangements for safeguarding are as effective as possible. For example, during the inspection a potential online safeguarding risk was highlighted. Leaders took swift action to address this. This is indicative of leaders' commitment to ensuring that pupils are safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- School leaders accurately identify where the school performs well and where it needs to improve. Rigorous monitoring procedures ensure that underperforming areas are identified and form the basis of the school's plan for improvement. Middle leaders complete half-termly evaluations called 'impact planners'. These are based on key areas for improvement. As a result, all school leaders know the school development priorities well and are collectively focused on school

improvement. However, the school development plan needs more detail in order to provide further guidance and accountability to governors and leaders at all levels.

- School leaders have ensured that they know each teacher's strengths and areas for development accurately. As a result, they are confident in who the strongest teachers are and who needs support. Teachers have been set measurable targets for their development, and some teachers have had opportunities to work with a mentor and observe good practice in school. As a result, teaching in school is improving. However, there are still areas where the quality of teaching across school is inconsistent.
- Leaders have been quick to analyse the causes of the dip in key stage 2 reading and writing results and have made key changes to the teaching of these subjects throughout school. Where there are still underperforming year groups, cohesive plans are in place to secure further improvement. Concerns about individuals and/or groups of pupils are dealt with swiftly through effective half-termly pupil progress meetings. Pupils at risk of falling behind in reading, writing and mathematics are identified and next steps are planned. As a result, internal assessment data and inspection evidence indicate that, in the majority of year groups, pupils are making good progress.
- The small but significant group of pupil premium children are making good progress in all subjects, based on their starting points. A comprehensive gap analysis completed every half term enables leaders to clearly identify where to target support. As a result, 100% of pupil premium pupils passed the Year 1 phonic check, and pupil premium pupils in Year 6 made stronger progress across the year than other pupils.
- Governors are ambitious for the success of the school. This is evident through their determination to delay the recruitment of a headteacher until they found a candidate with high enough expectations to move the school forward. Governors play an active role in school and work closely with senior leaders to plan for future improvements. Governors are proactive in initiating meetings with key members of staff and feeding back their findings at governors' meetings. However, governors are not always rigorous enough in their challenge of senior leaders, particularly about outcomes.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders continue to secure consistency in the quality of teaching across school
- the school's website meets the current Department for Education's statutory requirements
- governors provide more rigorous challenge to senior leaders, particularly in relation to outcomes.

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

published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Davies  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held discussions with the senior leadership team. I met with a group of phase leaders. I also met members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I considered the 49 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and spoke to parents in the playground. I joined you in short visits to classes to observe learning. I met with a group of pupils and spoke with pupils in lessons. I looked through pupils' books and scrutinised documentation, including the school's own evaluation of its performance and the school development plan. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures, including policies. I carried out checks on staff employed in the school and checked the school website. The views of staff were considered through the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire about the school.