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Mrs Sharon Flowers
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Flowers

Short inspection of Bramingham Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 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 previous inspection. You and your team, including governors, have created a caring and inclusive environment, valued by pupils and parents. There is a strong unity between staff, pupils and parents which permeates the whole school community. All staff who completed Ofsted's staff questionnaire agree that they are proud to be members of the school. Parents too appreciate the community ethos. One parent stated: 'The school is a supportive, encouraging and calm place. It has a community feel.' Since the previous inspection, there has been an increase in numbers of pupils entering Bramingham who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The school's strong reputation for pastoral care, along with the ability of teachers and support staff to adapt their teaching skills to help pupils who have a range of different needs, has meant that parents with children who need additional support choose Bramingham Primary School in preference to those nearer their homes.

Relationships between pupils and adults are mutually respectful. Teachers set high expectations. This is demonstrated in pupils' behaviour and learning. Pupils present their work well and are eager to participate in whole-class discussions.

Parents value the support you provide for their children. One parent commented: 'Bramingham Primary is a wonderful school. Their inclusivity and value for all children is evident within school life.'

It is evident from lesson observations, pupils' workbooks, the school's tracking and assessment information that pupils at Bramingham make good progress from their very different starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.

Leaders are aware that, because of the very different and often complex needs of pupils in the school, leaders and teachers need to focus precisely on pupils' individual needs to gain an accurate view of the progress individual pupils are making.

Teachers and leaders are extremely skilled at identifying pupils' needs when they enter the school. Although the early years provision has seen significant staff changes over the year, this has not detracted from the leaders' efforts to ensure that children make good and better progress from their starting points.

A focus on the teaching and learning of communication, language, listening and attention continue to be a priority for the school. Progress information demonstrates that children who enter the school struggling with communication and language skills make better than expected progress.

Your systems for assessing and tracking children's progress in the early years are accurate. Leaders' close analysis of children's historic progress information from Reception and Year 1 identified that the transition between the early years and key stage 1 needed strengthening. This has led to an increasing focus on support for children who leave Reception not fully secure in some of the areas of learning. As a result, children's achievement in 2017 has improved and the majority of children leave Reception achieving a good level of development.

Safeguarding is effective.

All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You ensure that the necessary checks are made on all staff prior to their taking up their appointments.

You have created a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. This is demonstrated through the effective work carried out by your family workers. Comprehensive and detailed systems show that concerns are meticulously recorded and followed up in a timely fashion. Staff have established effective relationships with external agencies that ensure that pupils' very different needs are sufficiently met.

Your commitment to pupils' welfare is further demonstrated in the wide range of training your staff undertake to ensure that they can support vulnerable families in the best way they can. All staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire agree that pupils are safe at school and all parents who responded to the Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, agree that pupils are safe and happy at Bramingham.

Pupils who completed the Ofsted questionnaire said they feel safe at school and those whom I met during the inspection told me they feel safe in school. Pupils told me that they 'didn't know of bullying happening', and that they could talk to someone in the school if they were worried. Leaders have ensured that the

curriculum teaches pupils how to keep safe. For example, pupils can explain the dangers of the internet and how to stay safe online.

Inspection findings

- In order to check whether the school remains good, my first line of enquiry looked at the actions you and your leaders are taking to improve the standards of writing across the school. This was because, although 2017 attainment improved in key stages 1 and 2, at key stage 1 it was below average. Progress information indicated that some pupils did not make the progress they should have in 2017. In addition, historical information highlighted writing as a concern for the last two years.
- You and your leaders have been continually reviewing the teaching and learning of writing to adapt it to the changing needs of pupils. You have recently adopted your chosen approach where pupils use and build on prior learning that develops pupils' communication and language skills. For example, in a Year 5 class, pupils were studying the Victorian era. They were able to use this to help them confidently write from the perspective of a Victorian child. As a result, pupils demonstrate good progress in writing in their high-quality and purposeful writing.
- In key stage 1, pupils were reciting the events of a story using actions and pictures. All pupils were able to talk about the events in the right order using new words they had recently learned. This ensured that pupils had experiences and knowledge to help them write the sequence of events.
- In the Year 3 classes, pupils were using their school visit to a Stone Age site to inspire them to write. Both classrooms were set up as a roundhouse with a mock fire in the centre of the room and mock animal skins surrounding it. A photo of a roundhouse, from the trip, was projected onto the wall. Pupils were stimulated and, consequently, were inspired to write using their experiences.
- There is clearly a consistent approach to the teaching and learning of writing across all year groups as seen in lesson activities and in pupils' work. Teachers are enthused by this new approach because of the positive impact it is having on pupils' writing regardless of their different starting points. Pupils in all year groups take pride in their work and the younger pupils spend time carefully forming their letters and joining their handwriting accurately. Consequently, the quality of teaching and learning of writing is improving.
- It became very clear that teachers are effective at teaching grammar and punctuation, as evidenced in 2017 results where pupils achieved in line with national expectations at the end of key stage 2.
- Although I was able to see evidence of writing in some topic work, there was less evidence of pupils having enough opportunities to apply their writing skills regularly. You agreed that pupils need to be given more opportunities to write at length more regularly so that they can practise their skills. You and leaders are currently reviewing the curriculum and identifying further opportunities to ensure

that pupils are given more opportunities to write at length and across a range of subjects.

- My second line of enquiry was concerned with how leaders track pupils' progress in phonics across the early years and key stage 1. The reason for this was that in 2017 fewer than 80% of pupils met the standard in the phonics screening check. Leaders were able to show me a very detailed tracking system which identified children's gaps in phonics knowledge from when they enter Reception.
- Your chosen approach for teaching phonics in different groups to meet their varying needs is ensuring that small-group teaching supports pupils to catch up, particularly when their starting points are lower than expected. As a result, pupils in key stage 1 make good and better progress in phonics from their different starting points.
- Pupils apply their phonics skills well in their reading. Consequently, the progress pupils make in reading is strong with pupils in key stages 1 and 2 achieving in line with national expectations at the higher standards.
- My final line of enquiry looked at how leaders support different groups of pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. You and your leaders were able to provide evidence that demonstrated that leaders are meticulous in their monitoring and assessment of progress for all pupil groups. You were able to provide and show valid explanations for some pupils who did not make the expected progress. This was often because of complex needs or circumstances, which in some cases prevented pupils from attending school regularly. However, for all vulnerable pupils it was very clear that the school provided the best support to pupils and families.
- Inspection evidence confirms that those pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities make good and better progress from their starting points. This is because teaching staff know these pupils very well and can plan precisely their next steps in learning. However, you and leaders acknowledge that teachers need to provide even more challenge to other pupils, including the most able, to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in writing and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- teachers provide pupils with opportunities to write at length more regularly
- teachers give pupils opportunities to apply their writing skills in a range of subjects
- teachers plan activities which enable more pupils to attain at the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Cindy Impey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- During the inspection, I met with you, the senior leader and governors.
- I met with a representative from the local authority and I spoke with parents at the end of the day.
- I visited all year groups and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and as they moved around the school.
- I spoke to pupils in and around the school.
- I reviewed a number of documents, including the single central record of employment checks, the school's self-evaluation, pupils' assessment and progress information, the school improvement plan and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- I also took account of the 48 responses to Parent View and 46 text messages from parents. I also considered the results provided by 62 members of staff in the school's staff questionnaire and 56 pupils who responded to the pupil questionnaire.