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Mr John Sarbutts  
Executive Headteacher  
Brington Primary School  
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Dear Mr Sarbutts

### **Short inspection of Brington Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 27 March 2018, 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 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education since the previous inspection. Since taking up appointment as executive headteacher in January 2015, you have brought about a number of changes to improve both the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes at the school. The Althorp Partnership, of which Harlestone Primary is also a member, has given you the additional capacity to bring about the necessary improvements. Joint professional development and the opportunity to plan lessons collaboratively have fostered a strong team spirit across the partnership. Through lesson observation, the review of work in pupils' books and the regular analysis of pupil progress data you have ensured that school leaders and teachers have a very clear view of the progress that pupils are making. You have increased staff accountability, while at the same time being supportive. As one member of staff said with reference to you, 'He is a great person to work for. He respects our professionalism.' You have clearly fostered a great degree of loyalty among your colleagues.

When you took up post, you recognised that Brington pupils were not making the progress of which they were capable. This has provided a strong impetus to your approach to school improvement. At the time of the last inspection of Brington Primary, inspectors asked school leaders to provide pupils with tasks that challenge all pupils at the right level. In the lessons that we visited together, we observed teaching that provided activities which were carefully tailored to the age and ability of pupils. Pupils I spoke with told me that the work they are given is neither too hard nor too easy but 'about right'.

We also observed teaching assistants providing good support for pupils who needed some additional help. The changes you have made to assessment and the way in which you track the progress of individual pupils are helping teachers to identify any gaps in pupils' learning and what they need to do to address them.

Leaders were also asked to raise attainment and progress in mathematics and to provide training to teachers to bolster their confidence in the teaching of the subject. The teachers I spoke with reported that the professional development they have received has improved their subject knowledge, enabling them to teach mathematics more effectively. We saw this to good effect in the mathematics lessons that we observed. In Class 1, pupils were secure in their understanding of less than, more than and equals to. In Class 2, pupils in one group were able to clearly articulate the key features of 3D shapes, while pupils in a second group showed considerable skill in mastering how to measure accurately using a protractor. The proportion of pupils meeting or exceeding age-related expectations by the end of Year 6 in 2017 was higher than that seen nationally. Pupils made average progress given their starting points, as was also the case in reading and writing.

At the time of the last inspection, leaders were asked to involve subject leaders more in monitoring and evaluating learning in lessons. There has been some progress in this area but improving the effectiveness of leadership in areas other than English and mathematics remains a priority. Through your review of the curriculum you have mapped what should be taught in all subjects in both classes. This is assisting teachers in the planning of their lessons and helping to ensure that most subjects are properly covered. However, provision for teaching a foreign language is weak.

As a small school, you understand how important it is to learn from other schools and to learn from best practice elsewhere. You have benefited considerably from your involvement in the English and mathematics networks offered by your local teaching school alliance. The local authority has signposted good practice in the teaching of writing in another school, and this is now informing the teaching of writing at Brington Primary. You and the governors actively seek external challenge, as evidenced by the external review which is carried out by fellow headteachers.

Governors are pleased about the progress that the school has made since your arrival but are in no way complacent. They want the very best for all pupils. They have a very good understanding of the historical performance of the school and of the progress of pupils who are currently in the school. They take an active part in the formulation of the school development plan and provide the right degree of challenge when reviewing the progress that you are making in terms of the agreed priorities.

The pupils I spoke with during the inspection were delightful. They are justifiably proud of their school and were keen to talk to me about it. They very much enjoy being part of a small, caring school and see their schoolmates as being their friends. They very much enjoy their lessons and feel that they are making good progress.

They value the feedback that the teachers give them as they feel that this helps them to learn from their mistakes and to improve their work. They were effusive in their comments about the range of additional opportunities they have, whether it be the residential trips or the chance to learn a new sport at the local secondary school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

School leaders provide a strong safeguarding culture at the school, ensuring that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The business manager is thorough in ensuring that all the required vetting of staff and volunteers takes place. Governors are also rigorous in ensuring that safeguarding has a high priority at the school. All policies are up to date and readily available on the school website. Staff are expected to indicate that they have read all key policies. Staff and governors receive regular training and know how to raise a concern, should one arise. Pupils learn about the importance of staying safe in lessons and during special assemblies. They learn about how to stay safe in a digital world on the safer internet day. The pupils I spoke with said there was no bullying at the school but that if it did occur they would know who to speak to.

### **Inspection findings**

- Since your appointment you have worked successfully to raise the profile of the school within the community and to engage more effectively with parents. The parents I spoke with before school were full of praise for the school. Several parents commented favourably on the nurturing environment you provide as a small school. For some parents this is clearly a key factor in sending their children to your school. As one parent remarked with reference to her son: 'He is a different child since he came here. He is much more confident and he loves coming to school.' 'They really know your child,' said another parent. Your tea party for grandparents, the Father's Day breakfast and the range of fundraising activities that you take part in have all contributed to putting Brington Primary at the heart of the community. The 15 parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, were very positive about the school.
- The assessment data that you shared during the inspection showed that most pupils who are currently in the school are making good progress. This was supported by what we saw in the pupils' books. Their mathematics books show that pupils are successfully acquiring the expected knowledge and skills as they move through the school. In writing, teachers provide pupils with a broad range of writing opportunities in the form, for example, of story writing and diary entries. However, the quality of pupils' writing is sometimes marred by grammatical inaccuracies, meaning that it falls short of the highest standards.
- Both you and the governors recognise that improving overall attendance and reducing the amount of persistent absence is a priority for the school. You emphasise the importance good attendance by rewarding it but and have also shown a willingness to challenge parents who choose not to send their children to school on a regular basis.

## **Next steps for the school**

### **Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:**

- teachers throughout the school have high expectations regarding accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation so that there is an improvement in the quality of pupils' writing
- subject leaders have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and the standards achieved by pupils in the subjects for which they have a responsibility
- provision for the teaching a modern foreign language is strengthened.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Drabble  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, with the school business manager and with members of the governing body. I met with three subject leaders and spoke with a group of children. I heard two children read. I made a tour of the school, observed teaching in two classes and undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and documents relating to safeguarding. I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school, spoke to one parent over the telephone and took account of their responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.