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Dr Diane Elleman  
Executive Headteacher  
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Dear Dr Elleman

### **Short inspection of Bradwell Village School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 April 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 November 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You joined the school in September 2016 as executive headteacher and now provide leadership across three schools. You have skilfully identified the strengths of staff to develop a senior leadership team to ensure that Bradwell continues to improve rapidly.

You rightly focused your attention on developing a safe and happy school, and have tackled recent poor behaviour well. This, along with other improvements, is recognised by the large majority of parents and carers, who are supportive of the school. They are pleased with the positive impact you and your senior leadership team have had since you joined the school.

The curriculum has developed considerably since your arrival. It gives pupils a wide range of exciting learning opportunities that capture their imagination and stimulate curiosity. The quality of pupils' art work is stunning, and they love the variety of sporting opportunities that the school provides. Pupils talked excitedly about winning the 'Strictly Come Dancing' competition in Milton Keynes and going on to represent their school and region in the national finals.

The relatively new members of the governing body are led by a knowledgeable and committed co-chair of governors who holds leaders to account and challenges any underperformance. He uses his current experience in education to support and develop the roles of other governors. Governors appreciate the benefits of working

within a federation, and support your forward-looking leadership. They share your passion for making the school the best that it can be.

Leaders have tackled successfully the areas for improvement from the last inspection. Learning is planned well, with lessons providing appropriate challenge for all pupils, especially the most able. An effective example of this challenge was seen in a Year 4 mathematics group. Pupils were working out the costs of different menu choices at popular restaurants. The room was buzzing with conversation about how they could best tackle the different problems, and adults were well placed to offer appropriate support and further challenge. One boy, explaining that he loves the challenges given by his teacher, said, 'It's fun learning like this because it gets my brain working.'

Since the last inspection, you have given pupils much greater responsibility for their own learning. For example, on most Thursdays, Year 6 pupils provide lunch for some staff. Pupils carry out surveys to identify preferences, plan menus, buy the ingredients, cook and then serve, as well as washing and tidying up.

You accurately identify the school's main strengths and areas for improvement. You were disappointed by Year 6 pupils' outcomes in 2017, and have worked hard with your senior leadership team to understand why these results dipped. Leaders have accurately identified gaps in pupils' learning in reading and mathematics. They are working determinedly to ensure that current pupils are on track to improve their end of key stage 2 outcomes, and for pupils to make stronger progress from their key stage 1 starting points.

You know that there is further work to be done to ensure that more pupils make rapid progress across the school, and for all staff to have the highest expectations. You are focused on further developing your senior leadership team so that members effectively challenge any underperformance within their teams.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe in school and know that if they have any problems an adult will always help them. Pupils have a good understanding of everyday risks, including those they face when using technology. They talk eloquently about what they need to do to keep safe and why it is important to act responsibly when using the internet. Leaders have established effective record-keeping systems to ensure that all safety concerns are recorded quickly. This enables your team to make swift and detailed referrals to other agencies when necessary. Members of your team are rigorous in their pursuit of information from others and are not afraid to challenge on behalf of pupils when they feel that more could be done.

You ensure that full recruitment checks are carried out on everyone who works or volunteers in school. Your new safeguarding governor has carried out a thorough monitoring of the school's safer recruitment practice. The thorough induction process for new staff, and the regular safeguarding training and updates for staff

and governors, ensure that all are well trained in child protection.

## **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, we focused on the school's safeguarding practice and how incidents of bullying are managed. We also explored the impact of leaders' actions to ensure that the most able pupils are challenged to achieve the highest standards, with a particular focus on reading and mathematics. We also looked at whether teaching was accelerating the progress of all pupils and how effectively leaders, including governors, are driving improvement.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and know that they will be looked after well. If they are worried about anything, they know where to go for help. I met one of 'Brad's Buddies', who explained that he helps pupils out at playtime if they have nobody to play with or if they feel sad. He said, 'At this school, we help each other.'
- Pupils' behaviour is often exemplary. They are very polite and demonstrate high levels of respect for one another. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils know that any poor behaviour is dealt with quickly and efficiently. A number of parents reported that the number of incidents of bullying has decreased significantly over the last two years. The very large majority of parents now feel that their children are safe in school and that bullying is not a significant issue. The work of the pastoral team has been significant in making the school a safe and welcoming place where pupils look forward to learning.
- In 2017, the proportions of pupils attaining the higher standards in reading and mathematics were well below the national averages. You have rightly prioritised actions to increase the number of pupils working at greater depth across the school, to ensure that more pupils attain the higher standards in reading and in mathematics by the end of key stage 2. With your senior leadership team, you show a purposeful commitment to improving outcomes for all pupils, particularly the most able. I saw clear evidence that teachers routinely challenge the most able pupils in mathematics to develop their problem-solving skills. As a result, current pupils are making strong progress.
- You are addressing the reasons for the poor outcomes in reading in 2017. Pupils told you that they enjoyed reading but did not like the way reading was taught. As a result, leaders arranged training for staff and a fresh approach to the teaching of reading is now in place. This approach ensures that there are more opportunities for pupils to read high-quality texts. I saw pupils in Year 5 reading and then sensitively discussing a text about bereavement. They were clearly empathising with the main character in the story. As a result of these changes to teaching, pupils are now very positive about reading and enjoy a good selection of texts, which they read confidently. They are now making faster progress.
- You and your team leaders are working hard to ensure that teaching supports pupils to make strong progress. Planning is consistently good, and the specific needs of groups of pupils are correctly identified. Team leaders are good role models, and your plan to share their effective practice across the school will help pupils to make faster progress in all areas of learning.

- Pupils in some year groups are not making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. You have identified where additional support is needed and are beginning to challenge staff whose expectations of pupils are not high enough.
- You are working hard to ensure that teachers assess pupils' learning accurately. You were recently appointed as the executive headteacher of the local infant school. You have taken this opportunity to help the staff of both schools plan the curriculum to ensure the continuity of learning and progression of skills for pupils aged 4 to 11 years. Staff are working together to ensure that they understand what the school expects of pupils in each year group and to accurately assess pupils' achievements.
- All leaders, including governors, are committed to improving pupils' outcomes by the end of key stage 2. They know that more pupils, particularly the most able, should be making faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics and are working hard to achieve this. The newly federated governing body has chosen to have a separate standards committee for each school, as governors recognise the different range of pupils' needs in each school and want to be sure that they challenge appropriately. The reports that governors receive from leaders provide a clear and accurate current picture of the school and encourage challenge and debate.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers consistently provide all pupils with an appropriate level of challenge and stretch so that more achieve the higher standards
- they further strengthen the role and skills of the senior leadership team for a greater impact on teaching and learning across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Varnom  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the school's senior leadership team, the pastoral team, three governors and the school's business manager to review your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. Together, we observed learning in a number of lessons. I spoke to parents and pupils to gather their views of the school and heard three pupils read. We scrutinised learning in a number of pupils' books alongside your

assessment tracking information. I reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, leaders' progress reports to governors, planning files, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, and the minutes of governing body meetings.

I looked at 34 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 24 staff survey returns. I took into consideration the responses of 31 pupils to the pupil survey. I checked the effectiveness of your safeguarding arrangements, including those related to recruitment.