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Mrs Sandy Ettridge and Mrs Victoria Bull  
Joint Headteachers  
Brigstock Latham's Church of England Primary School  
Latham Street  
Brigstock  
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Northamptonshire  
NN14 3HD

Dear Mrs Ettridge and Mrs Bull

### **Short inspection of Brigstock Latham's Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 26 June 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 2014.

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

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

Since your appointment as joint headteachers, in September 2017, the school has continued to offer a nurturing and stimulating learning environment. You and your dedicated team of staff know pupils well as individuals. All staff take great care to support pupils' academic and personal development. Your work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that pupils are ready for life in modern Britain. The Christian ethos of the school runs through all that you do.

Pupils are well behaved. There is a strong sense of mutual respect between pupils. Pupils typically listen attentively to teachers and contribute with enthusiasm in discussions. Pupils spoke with confidence and enthusiasm about their lessons. You provide pupils with a broad range of subjects and learning experiences. Pupils shared with me the numerous clubs they are able to attend, such as archery, fencing, choir and art clubs. Moreover, they demonstrated great enthusiasm about the positions of responsibility they could hold. Parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were positive about the school's work. They all indicated that they would recommend the school to other parents.

You have continued to improve the quality of teaching since your appointment as headteachers. Teachers provide pupils with interesting and effective learning

experiences. They plan activities that meet the needs of most pupils well. Teachers use questioning skilfully, both to check on pupils' understanding and to make them think harder. At times, however, teachers do not challenge some pupils well enough.

You have taken effective action to improve pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics since the last inspection. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to practise calculation and problem-solving skills. Teachers also provide pupils with effective strategies to help them improve their spelling. For example, teachers highlight words that pupils spell inaccurately. Pupils are then encouraged to rectify their mistakes by using the variety of resources provided. In addition, they are asked to use the word again in a different sentence to deepen their understanding. Pupils achieve similar standards to those nationally in the spelling checks.

Children get off to a good start in the early years. A high proportion of children reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. Leaders make effective use of the school's assessment system to identify and fill gaps in pupils' learning when they occur. Pupils in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 have continued to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection. In 2017, pupils reached higher standards than other pupils nationally. This was particularly true for Year 6 pupils who achieved a greater depth in their learning, especially in reading. Pupils who read to me during the inspection told me that they enjoy reading and do so regularly. They read with confidence and are developing skills appropriate to their age and ability.

Members of the governing body work well with you and the teachers. They have a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors provide you with appropriate support and challenge. Each governor is assigned to a different area of the school's work. This provides an effective way for governors to verify the positive difference that leaders' actions are making. At times, however, you do not provide members of the governing body with timely information about the progress that different groups of pupils are making.

You have an accurate view of the school's strengths and know what needs to improve. You acknowledge, however, that the success criteria in the school's improvement plans are not precise enough. At times, they do not focus well enough on pupils' progress. You recognise that, although pupils make good progress, not enough make rapid progress to reach even higher standards. This includes some disadvantaged pupils who do not catch up with other pupils nationally. In addition, you have rightly identified that pupils' attendance has declined.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils told me unanimously that they feel safe in school. They explained that this is because their teachers and their friends are 'like a family' to them. Pupils told me that they would always talk with an adult if they were worried. All the parents who responded to Parent View said that their children feel safe and happy at school.

Staff know this small school and community well. They are caring and vigilant in their approach. Staff explained with confidence the action they need to take if they have a concern. The designated teachers for child protection and safeguarding keep staff well informed about safeguarding matters. The procedures that leaders use to access any extra support or care pupils may need are thorough. The designated safeguarding governor is experienced in safeguarding matters. She carries out regular checks to ensure that records and systems are effective in keeping pupils safe.

## **Inspection findings**

- Pupils' progress in mathematics has improved, but it has not been as rapid as that in reading or writing. Expectations in mathematics across the school have risen. Leaders have introduced a new mathematics teaching scheme and assessment system. Teachers have visited other schools to observe strong practice. The use of practical equipment is helping pupils to understand the mathematics they are doing. Pupils told me how much they enjoy learning mathematics. They explained that this is because they are encouraged to explain their answers and to develop new skills.
- Pupils currently in the school are making good progress in mathematics. In almost all year groups, pupils are reaching standards similar to, and often above, those seen nationally. Teachers do not, however, move pupils on to harder work quickly enough or provide the extra challenge that some pupils need. Some pupils, therefore, do not make the accelerated progress they could.
- In key stage 2, pupils' writing skills have not developed as rapidly as their reading skills. Leaders have raised the profile of writing across the school. Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to write at length and in different contexts. Pupils take great pride in their writing. The quality of their handwriting and presentation of their work are strong. Pupils currently in the school are making good progress in writing. Standards are similar to those seen nationally. Not enough pupils, however, make rapid progress to reach the higher standards they should.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to help disadvantaged pupils make good progress. However, some disadvantaged pupils do not make enough progress to catch up with other pupils nationally. Governors have accurately identified that the pupil premium action plan does not provide sufficient detail. They have challenged leaders to be more precise about the actions they take to accelerate disadvantaged pupils' progress. A newly appointed leader for this area is taking effective action to rectify this.
- Pupils' attendance has been consistently above the national average since the last inspection. The attendance of current pupils, however, has declined. This is especially true for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders and governors have accurately identified this trend. They are establishing a tighter regime to remedy the decline. Some plans have yet to be implemented.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- senior leaders provide members of the governing body with timely information and more accurately defined success criteria to measure the impact of leaders' actions taken to improve pupils' progress
- leaders implement their plans to rectify the recent decline in pupils' attendance, especially that of disadvantaged pupils
- teachers provide pupils with even harder work to accelerate their progress, including the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Vondra Mays  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with both headteachers, the pupil premium leader and members of the governing body. The headteachers and I observed pupils' learning in several lessons. I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school. I spoke with pupils informally and met formally with a group of pupils. I also listened to pupils in Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4 read and examined samples of pupils' work.

In addition, I considered a range of documents. These included the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan and records relating to pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. I considered the parent responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as pupil and staff survey responses. I reviewed the school's safeguarding practices. The school's website was also checked to confirm whether it meets the requirements on the publication of specified information.