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25 September 2018

Ms Gill Kennaugh  
Headteacher  
Newbridge Primary School  
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Dear Ms Kennaugh

### **Short inspection of Newbridge Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 11 September 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.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You were appointed as headteacher in April 2018 after a considerable period of instability in the school's leadership. During this period of instability, there was a decline in the progress pupils made during their time in school, particularly in writing and mathematics. Since your appointment, you and key leaders are instilling a sense of urgency into school improvement. Parents and carers acknowledge that changes in leadership have been challenging but recognise the improvements you are making. As one parent commented, reflecting the views of others, 'I am impressed with the direction the school is going under Mrs Kennaugh's leadership.' The staff survey completed for this inspection shows staff wholeheartedly support the changes you are making. Recent assessments are encouraging in showing improvement, but there is more to do to ensure that this is sustained.

Governors are skilled and experienced. They are committed to supporting you in building on the improvements which have been made. They openly acknowledge that the achievement of pupils in the school should be stronger than it has been, even with the recent improvements.

At the time of the previous inspection, school leaders were asked to sharpen targets and timescales in the school improvement plan so that the impact of the plan could be tracked more closely. Priorities have been accurately identified from the school self-evaluation, for example the need to develop the teaching of writing and hasten

the progress of pupils who are disadvantaged. Last year's plan still did not set out sufficiently clearly how the impact of the actions would be measured. This has led to you and governors being unclear just how far this plan has taken you and being unsure of how you will move forward on key priorities to secure consistency in teaching and pupil progress.

School leaders at that time were also asked to improve feedback to pupils. You have developed this effectively and pupils are increasingly able to find their own mistakes and edit their work. They talk about taking responsibility for doing their best and, for example, correcting their own spelling errors.

Parents, pupils and governors describe a broad curriculum which offers enriching experiences to build pupils socially and culturally through their 'Newbridge Journey'. A pupil expressed this as, 'We are taught to be good people.' Pupils are particularly proud to talk about their involvement in music and sport.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have developed clear safeguarding policies and procedures which are well understood by staff and followed conscientiously. You have updated staff training promptly to take account of the latest guidance on keeping children safe. Staff know pupils well and show concern for their welfare. Together, you have created an effective culture of vigilance to protect pupils from harm. You promptly pass on concerns when a pupil may be at risk and you work effectively with other agencies. You persist in endeavouring to seek help for vulnerable families until you are confident that pupils are safe. Governors regularly review the school's procedures for safeguarding and you value their support, particularly with matters of health and safety. The school's procedures for undertaking and recording checks on all adults who work with pupils are robust and up to date.

A high proportion of parents responded to Parent View and all agree that their children feel happy and safe in school. As one parent typically expressed, 'Newbridge is a very caring and nurturing school and my children are very happy there.' Pupils say they feel safe in school because teachers look after them and friends can be trusted. They say friends fall out sometimes but they do not feel that this ever becomes bullying. They value the support from staff, particularly from the midday supervisors, to help them sort out any problems. Pupils are regularly taught about road safety and 'Stranger Danger'. They have learned good strategies for staying safe when using the internet.

### **Inspection findings**

- I followed a line of enquiry to determine how effectively teaching has been developed since the previous inspection. There has been unavoidable instability in teaching, particularly for some year groups, over time. Nevertheless, you have ensured that teachers have opportunities to take part in good-quality professional development. Increasingly, you are working with other schools to agree and secure accurate teacher assessment of pupils' progress. You have prioritised raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.

- You and other leaders make frequent checks on the quality of teaching, both by visiting lessons and looking at pupils' work. However, the advice given to teachers on how to improve is not precise enough to help them develop their practice quickly and securely. For example, monitoring records do not show how you are checking that teachers use knowledge about pupils' prior learning to plan for better progress. The advice given to teachers about how to improve the progress of individual pupils is not recorded in a way which is clear enough to check that it has been acted upon to good effect.
- I looked particularly at initiatives to develop the progress pupils are making in writing. Over the past year, leaders have established extensive training and new systems to improve progress in writing across the school. However, the latest outcomes show that there are still groups who, over time, make weak progress in writing, particularly middle-ability pupils and disadvantaged pupils. Although there is now a system of planning for pupils to reach expected and higher standards, there is still a lag in pupils' skills. A significant proportion of pupils have entered their new year groups insecure in the skills expected for their age.
- During the inspection, I visited classes and looked at pupils' work in writing. Pupils' work so far this term shows that the skills the most able pupils had acquired by the end of last year have been largely retained. Middle-ability pupils showed progress over the year, but their ability to retain their new skills is less secure. For some pupils, there was a marked difference in quality between their last piece of edited and improved work in their progress books and their first pieces of writing this year. For example, from the sample seen, key stage 2 middle-ability pupils do not routinely use paragraphs or structure their writing to express their ideas clearly. You acknowledge that the most skilled teachers sharply identify and plan strategies to overcome these gaps. However, teachers' use of the new planning and assessment initiatives to overcome pupils' gaps in learning with a sense of urgency is not consistent.
- The school's review of the 2017/18 strategic plan identifies that there is more to do to hasten the progress of disadvantaged pupils. You have conscientiously built a series of additional teaching programmes to help these pupils make better progress, particularly in mathematics and writing. Recent outcomes show that progress in mathematics this year is stronger. You and governors review disadvantaged pupils' progress regularly. The evidence from pupils' writing books shows that the plan is having the best influence on the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Together, we reviewed one of the ways you support and check on disadvantaged pupils' progress. You have set individual targets to guide additional teaching for disadvantaged pupils. However, currently, the 'pupil premium' books are not being used consistently, either across the school or within an individual workbook, to meet this aim. Not all teachers appear to understand this initiative. Consequently, the picture of progress towards targets, particularly in writing, is confused. You acknowledge that target setting now needs to be reviewed and the impact of additional funding evaluated to ensure that it is used to the best effect.
- You have reviewed and strengthened the teaching of phonics in the Reception

Year, as well as in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in the current Year 1 classes have come from Reception able to write words with simple phonic patterns, such as 'car' and 'sheep'. In the 2018 assessments, standards rose and the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was a little above the 2017 national average.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school improvement plan describes the pathway whereby leaders will continue to improve standards across the school, particularly for pupils who are middle attaining and those who are disadvantaged
- leaders are rigorous and sharp in their monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to make sure that it is at least consistently good across the school
- new systems are embedded so that there are consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing 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 Bath and North East Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Marriott  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and other leaders to discuss the school's progress. I also met with seven governors and a representative of the local authority. I visited classes to see learning in progress and talked to pupils about their learning. With you and other leaders, I reviewed a sample of pupils' work in writing. I met with a group of pupils who told me about their experience of the school. I considered a range of documentary evidence which included the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan for 2017/18 and the draft school development plan for the coming year. I considered information about the progress of pupils currently in the school. Additionally, I scrutinised safeguarding records, including those relating to the suitability of staff to work with children. I spoke to some staff about their recent training. I spoke to parents at the start of the inspection. I took account of the 213 responses to Parent View, the 204 additional comments and one letter from a parent. I also took account of the views of 32 members of staff through Ofsted's staff questionnaire.