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Mrs Alison Harvey  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Harvey

### **Short inspection of Bridgewater Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 15 November 2018 with Rebecca Ellers, Ofsted Inspector, 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 October 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your senior leaders and governors provide effective leadership. Leaders have a clear and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas where it can improve further. The governing body make regular visits to school so that they fully understand the work you do. Your self-evaluation of the school is honest, accurate and detailed in both your strengths and in the areas of the school that you need to develop.

Through using the school's motto 'Together We Learn', leaders have created a collaborative team ethos throughout the school. You are held in high regard by pupils, staff, governors and the vast majority of parents and carers alike. When asked to sum up their school in one word, pupils answered with 'co-operative', 'amazing', 'diverse' and 'respectful'. Members of staff described the school as a 'school of opportunity', where teachers and teaching assistants are encouraged to 'follow their own path'. Staff feel valued and are fully involved in maintaining and improving the good level of education for pupils. Summing up the views of many parents, one parent stated that: 'This is an amazing school with teachers who are passionate about nurturing their students and developing enthusiasm for learning.'

With the support of the local authority, leaders opened a nursery in January 2018 catering for three- and four-year-olds. The good provision for children throughout the early years clearly demonstrates the leaders' understanding of the importance of early learning. The learning environment is well organised and stimulating. Adults are well trained and have high expectations of all the children in the setting.

Activities are well planned with the children's interests and needs in mind. The children are highly engaged in their learning. They demonstrate sustained concentration and make the progress of which they are capable.

'The Bridge' offers well organised and informed support for pupils who require extra support in school. Pupils are encouraged to develop resilience and independence so that they do not become dependent on adult support. They are taught how to cope with and manage their feelings, and this raises their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well provided for in lessons, and this enables them to access the curriculum and to make good progress. Typically, parents described the school as the 'epitome of inclusion'. Pupils, regardless of ability or background, are taught well and individual needs are carefully catered for. This allows them to make good progress.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and are articulate and eager to learn. Older pupils, in particular, speak confidently about their work. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for their learning and for choosing the level of challenge. They understand the concept of learning from their mistakes and that it is acceptable to get things wrong. Pupils explained, 'When we make mistakes, it's a good thing. It shows we are learning.'

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders are tenacious in their approach to safeguarding. Records show that any safeguarding concerns are dealt with in a timely manner. This is because all staff not only understand their responsibility and the processes to follow but do so vigilantly. Leaders make sure that staff safeguarding training is up to date and that staff and governors are aware of new guidance and statutory information.

Almost all parents agree that their children are safe in school. Pupils are taught how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including when they are online. They say that the adults in school will help them if they have any concerns. Older pupils enjoy the responsibility of being a 'buddy' and supporting the younger children in school, ensuring that they are happy and safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They are able to discuss in detail what they have learned about British values. These values permeate the school. The school council is made up of an elected Prime Minister and a cabinet who help to make decisions. Displays around the school highlight an inclusive ethos, where diversity is celebrated, and pupils are valued.
- The curriculum is rich and broad. Work in pupils' books clearly demonstrates the wide variety of topics covered in lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic about a range of subjects from science to religious education. During the recent Remembrance Day service, pupils demonstrated their understanding of the commemoration through dance, music, art and poetry.

- The number of pupils on roll has increased since the previous inspection. There are now three classes in each year group. Leaders have maintained the good standards of teaching during this period of expansion. Newly qualified teachers are well supported in school so that they develop their skills quickly and make a valuable contribution to the teaching in the school.
- Plans for continued school improvements show that leaders, at all levels, have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, these plans are not currently precise enough with measurable targets and accurate timescales to allow leaders to hold teachers to account, or for governors to challenge leaders about the impact of their work on the outcomes for pupils.
- The vast majority of teachers and teaching assistants consistently use well-targeted questioning during lessons to help pupils to expand their understanding of concepts and to think deeply about their ideas. Expectations across the school are high. This was seen in the targets which are set for pupils in lessons and in their books. Pupils take pride in their work and present it well. Pupils are expected to edit and improve their work across the curriculum.
- Leaders have correctly identified a weakness in spelling. In pupils' work, there are instances where the same errors are repeated. This detracts from the otherwise interesting writing of many pupils. Steps to improve the teaching of spelling are underway. However, it is too early to see the impact of these developments.
- Historically, girls have not made as much progress as boys in mathematics. Teachers have challenged the belief held by some girls that their weaker attainment in mathematics was acceptable. Work in current pupils' books shows that this is having an impact on the progress made by these girls. There is no longer a significant difference in the progress of girls and boys.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans for improvement have more precise and measurable targets, with clear timescales against which leaders and governors can hold those responsible to account for the impact on pupils' learning and progress
- there is an improvement in the teaching of spelling so that pupils' accuracy increases, they avoid repeating the same errors and they are able to successfully edit and improve their writing.

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

Heidi Malliff  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, your deputy headteacher and your assistant headteachers and shared our key lines of inquiry. We also met with a representative from the local authority, six members of the governing body, three newly qualified teachers and four middle leaders. We spoke formally with a group of Year 6 pupils and informally to many others throughout the day. We considered the 214 responses of parents from Parent View, including the 170 free-text comments and spoke to several parents at the start of the school day. We visited all classes in the school, spending a short time in each, and looked at a sample of pupils' work. We viewed a range of documents, including an evaluation of the school's performance and plans for further improvement, case studies, attendance figures and information regarding pupils' progress across the school.