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12 December 2018

Mrs Sarah Bennett  
Headteacher  
Bassetts Farm Primary School  
St John's Road  
Exmouth  
Devon  
EX8 4GB

Dear Mrs Bennett

### **Short inspection of Bassetts Farm Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 November 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in April 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, leaders and governors are determined that all pupils receive the best possible education. You have ensured that pupils enjoy lessons and their welfare is at the heart of everything you do. While you have high expectations of pupils' academic achievement, you do not lose sight of important life skills such as developing confidence, independence and resilience. Parents confirmed that their children 'flourished' and 'increased in confidence' at the school.

The quality of education provided by the school is good. You ensure that the needs of pupils, including the most able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are well met. Aply supported by your senior leaders, you have worked with determination to improve the school further and you have had a good impact. Pupils achieve well at Bassetts Farm. The proportion of pupils who meet and exceed the standards expected for their age, at the end of key stage 2, has been above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics for the last two years. A higher than average proportion of key stage 1 pupils achieve well. Additionally, the proportion of children in early years achieving a good level of development is consistently high.

Overwhelmingly, parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to others. Parents are effusive in their praise of the care, guidance and support pupils receive. Pupils thoroughly enjoy discussing their work and are keen to succeed. Older children are very supportive of the younger ones. Pupils confirm that they feel behaviour is generally good in the school,

although a few say lessons are occasionally 'a bit noisy and we can't concentrate on our work'.

You have an accurate and realistic understanding of the school's current performance. Your plans clearly set out what needs to improve further, with specific and measurable targets. For example, you have taken effective action to tackle the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. You have concentrated on the quality of writing in the school, enabling pupils in key stage 1 to write at length in different subjects. There has also been a committed focus on using language and vocabulary more effectively across all key stages. This has resulted in pupils in key stage 2 improving their writing through the use of adventurous vocabulary, which is increasing the proportions achieving well by the end of Year 6.

You and other leaders know that there are some key areas that must remain a focus for improvement. In particular, the middle-ability pupils are not achieving as well as they should as they do not always understand what they have to do in lessons. You and your senior leaders are taking action to support teachers to teach more effectively in order to increase understanding and further develop the skills of these pupils. You are also ensuring that the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities improves in line with other pupils in the school. Leaders have more recently introduced strategies to ensure that work in lessons is not too easy or difficult. You have had some success in this aspect of your work. However, this remains a continuing focus for the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding because you, your staff and your governors give the safety of pupils a high priority. Staff and governor training is comprehensive, up to date and in line with current legislation. Staff vetting checks meet requirements and the single central record is meticulously kept. The governor responsible for safeguarding frequently checks that the school's single central record is maintained accurately.

Safeguarding records are of a very high quality. Systems for referring concerns about pupils are stringent and you monitor high-priority cases frequently. You also regularly monitor staff concerns noted on the system and refer individuals for further training if you feel that they need further guidance and support in identifying risks to pupils. The electronic system ensures that external agencies have clear and concise details of the needs of families. As a result, all members of the school community are cared for and valued.

Pupils attend regularly and are seldom late for school. Events such as 'Bikeability' and internet safety training ensure that pupils are well prepared to face risk in society. Pupils said that they feel safe and enjoy coming to school, bullying is rare and behaviour is generally good. They understood, and were sensitive to the fact, that sometimes pupils with additional needs could not always manage their behaviour well.

## Inspection findings

- At the beginning of this inspection, we agreed on the lines of enquiry to consider during the day. These were: what leaders have done to increase pupils' achievement in writing in early years and key stage 1; how leaders support the level of challenge in teaching, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEN; and to what extent leaders' actions are improving outcomes for middle-attaining pupils.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and teach challenging phonics lessons as soon as children enter school. There is early identification of children who have speech and language difficulties and individual support is immediately put in place for these children. There are many opportunities for children to produce different types of writing as they move through key stage 1. Leaders place a focus on writing for a purpose, developing a wide vocabulary and correct punctuation and spelling.
- Pupils are encouraged to self-edit their work, correcting mistakes as they re-read the text. Leaders monitor the quality of writing regularly in order to support improvements. This has resulted in a greater proportion of pupils achieving highly in key stage 1 in 2018.
- From their starting points, children are given a high level of challenge through a wide range of experiences, both indoors and outdoors. Those pupils with SEND are well supported pastorally. Social, emotional and physical barriers to learning are identified and a wide range of carefully planned interventions are put in place. These include using side rooms as quiet places for group work and for anxious pupils to settle, and the outdoor gym for physical development activities.
- Both disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs are taught in environments where they can thrive, by caring adults sensitive to their individual needs. As a result of these interventions, which include reading, phonics and writing catch-up programmes, the gap in achievement between them and their peers is narrowing. The school works closely with parents, who value the school's sensitivity to their child's needs highly, to ensure that pupils' learning is supported at home. The school is continuing to focus on improving further the progress of these groups.
- Pupils whose starting points are low when they enter the school make good progress, which is evident in their books. Teachers use literacy and numeracy 'learning walls' effectively in the classroom to prompt pupils' learning. They help pupils remember what they have to do to solve mathematical problems or write in a grammatically correct style. Work themes are designed to engage and interest all pupils in whole-school topics. Teachers have high aspirations for all pupils. Middle-attaining pupils are identified as early as possible in order to set work that helps them to make better progress as they move through the school. Governors know that this group of pupils is a focus for school improvement and challenge you on their achievement. Homework is set to consolidate what pupils have learned in lessons and involve family members in active and thought-provoking activities, such as making a hedgehog house.
- You target middle-attaining pupils when monitoring writing standards, for

example in staff meetings. However, teachers' lessons are not always clear and precise enough about what is expected of pupils of different abilities across the curriculum. As a result, a few pupils say that they do not understand what they have to do when multiple challenges are set for them, or why.

- You and other leaders have worked tirelessly and successfully to implement a broad and balanced curriculum. You are also implementing a system which encourages pupils to challenge themselves more effectively and think carefully about how they learn. This system has very recently been introduced and the impact of this on the quality of what pupils know, understand and can do is yet to be seen.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers set challenges and tasks in lessons more specifically to meet the needs and abilities of pupils, particularly middle-attaining pupils, so that they are able to achieve even better.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Jane  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I spoke with you and your deputy headteachers. I also held meetings with leaders responsible for early years, special educational needs, literacy and pupil premium funding and impact. I spoke to a group of pupils and individuals around the school as well as representatives of the governing body, including the chair.

Together with your senior leaders, we made visits to lessons in all year groups to observe pupils' attitudes to learning. I evaluated pupils' workbooks in detail with you and senior leaders. I considered a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation, development plans and school performance information. I also looked at behaviour and safeguarding documentation, including the single central record and your analysis of attendance, and I evaluated the safety of the school site.

I took full account of the 65 responses to Parent View, as well as the 31 free-texts received for the inspection.