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Mr Lee Batstone  
Headteacher  
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Herefordshire  
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Dear Mr Batstone

### **Short inspection of Madley Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 February 2019, 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. You lead the school with integrity and commitment to create an outward-looking and ambitious culture within the school. This is reflected in the school motto, 'Be the best you can be'. You have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that are priorities for the future. Since the last inspection, you have worked to grow the leadership capacity within the school. This has been successfully achieved and together with your deputy head, senior leaders are taking active responsibility in leading improvements across the school. As a consequence, changes have been made which have enhanced teaching and improved outcomes for pupils.

Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and are proud of their school. They are articulate, enthusiastic and welcoming to visitors. A school code has been established by staff and pupils. It reflects the ethos of how everyone in the school community should behave towards each other: 'respect, engagement, sensitivity, positivity, expectation, care and trust' are the key words. Excellent warm relationships exist between adults and pupils. Pupils are exceptionally well behaved around school and in lessons.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, are extremely positive about the school. They feel that their children are safe, happy and taught well. One parent commented, 'I feel that this school really gets to know its pupils and meets the individual needs of the children. I like the emphasis on respect and responsibility as children are taught to

look after their school environment and that of the wider community.' This was seen clearly during the inspection. Many parents said that they appreciated the strong commitment to values, as well as the 'impressive' range of activities and experiences that the school offers.

Governors make a significant contribution to the strong leadership of the school. Governors visit the school frequently and spend time talking with staff about new developments. They are highly skilled and well informed about all aspects of school life. This means that their challenge and support for school leaders are both highly effective.

In the last inspection, you were asked to ensure that the whole-school data analysis routinely includes and tracks the progress of the early years pupils. You have worked with the early years leader to ensure that this assessment is now included in whole-school self-evaluation. This enables leaders to have an easily accessible overview of pupils' progress across the whole school.

A further aspect you were asked to address was the quality of writing. You have put in place strategies to ensure that all teachers consistently apply the same expectations of pupils' writing and presentation skills. This has been extremely successful and outcomes for pupils in writing have risen dramatically.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders, staff and governors work with a clear purpose to ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are highly effective. Visitors are checked thoroughly on entry to the school and information is provided relating to safeguarding procedures. New members of staff are subject to rigorous pre-employment checks to ensure that they do not pose any risk to pupils. This is monitored by you and the governors.

Pupils know how to stay safe in the real world and when using the internet. The opportunities they are given, particularly in forest school, enable them to develop a clear understanding of risk and how to manage it safely. For example, they are able to light fires to cook and whittle wood using knives.

Pupils say that they feel very safe and well cared for in the school. They say that bullying is rare. They feel confident that adults would help them if needed and problems would be sorted swiftly and fairly.

Pupils' attendance is carefully monitored by the learning mentor in school. She knows the pupils well and works closely with families to ensure that attendance is as good as it can be. Consequently, rates of attendance have continued to rise and are currently above the national average.

## Inspection findings

- In order to establish whether the school continues to be good, I considered the impact of leaders' work on securing good outcomes for pupils in mathematics. This was because the improvements in pupil achievement evident in 2017 were not sustained in 2018. Indeed, they had dipped back down again considerably. You fully recognised the need to improve the teaching of mathematics and, together with the mathematics subject leader, have put in place training for all staff.
- You have ensured that across the school pupils are given very regular opportunities to practise basic arithmetic skills, in order to keep skills sharp. Evidence in pupils' books demonstrates that they make good progress over time.
- Through careful review and analysis, you and your staff have a clear understanding of the reasons why pupils did not achieve as well as they should have in mathematics. Therefore, leaders are ensuring that pupils are starting to be given more opportunities to develop skills in reasoning. I observed some skilful questioning by teachers, which required pupils to explain their thinking and justify their answers. Through talk and collaboration, pupils are developing a full range of mathematical vocabulary. When working independently, pupils are encouraged to show their working pictorially: 'prove it with a picture'. They are encouraged to represent numbers using a range of models. In this way, pupils are beginning to establish a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts. However, these strategies need more time to bring about the necessary sustained improvement in pupils' progress.
- Another focus for the inspection was to determine whether the high outcomes achieved in writing are being sustained. Pupils are given many opportunities to engage in extended writing and, because of the themed approach to the curriculum, this is in the context of other subjects. Pupils are very well supported by teachers in writing. Teachers model writing and discuss the thinking processes a writer goes through when making decisions about what to write. Pupils are given sentence starters to help them structure their writing. They are given word banks to extend their vocabulary. Consequently, pupils' written work flows in a logical sequence and is full of adventurous and sophisticated vocabulary.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of grammar and punctuation. However, further work is needed to improve spelling, which is now the weakest element of writing across the school. You acknowledge this and are beginning to put in place strategies that not only improve spelling, but enable pupils to have a greater understanding of how words are constructed.
- The final aspect of the school that I focused on was the extent to which the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and the wider world. I found this to be a significant strength.
- The curriculum is creatively planned around a main theme. For example, in the Year 6 theme of 'Fighting to Survive', pupils have explored how the heart works and how to maintain a healthy heart and lifestyle. They have looked at natural disasters and extreme weather. Learning is underpinned by first-hand

experiences. Trips and visitors play a large part. In the 'Fighting to Survive' theme, pupils will visit the museum of medicine in Worcester and will have a visit from a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) specialist on climate change. Pupils say that they particularly appreciate the number and range of trips they participate in and visitors to enrich learning.

- Pupils have an extensive range of enrichment across sport and the arts. Specialist coaches lead physical education (PE) lessons and extra-curricular sessions. This has led to pupils developing strong skills and to the school performing very highly in external competitions.
- Year 6 pupils have undertaken enterprise work in connection with a range of local businesses. In past years, previous Year 6 cohorts have used the funding to create a legacy project. Last year, this was a special exploration garden with planting and seating for the remaining pupils to use.
- Pupils enjoy the Friday afternoon 'projects'. These are workshops that extend the children's learning in a number of areas. Workshops are led by internal and external specialists. They include forest school, eco activities and gardening, Lego, athletics, construction, Irish dancing, young voices and cooking.
- You and your staff have ensured that the extensive provision that exists in school makes a strong contribution to the development of well-rounded, confident and successful pupils, who are well prepared for their future.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teachers consistently apply the agreed approaches to the teaching of mathematics, ensuring that pupils are provided with sufficient opportunities to develop their reasoning skills
- pupils' spelling is improved
  - by adopting a more consistent approach to the teaching of spelling
  - by providing opportunities to extend pupils' understanding of how words are constructed.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Davies  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, other members of school staff and members of the governing body. I also spoke, on the telephone, to the local authority head of learning and achievement and the school's external adviser. Together, you and I planned the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. We jointly visited classes in the school to observe pupils' learning, speak with them and look in their books. I looked at an extensive range of current books from each year group. I also spoke with pupils at breaktime and during the day. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I took into account the views of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I looked at a range of documentation, including information about safeguarding and attendance. I scrutinised and discussed the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement.