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Mrs Fiona Dorey  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Dorey

### **Short inspection of Great Bradfords Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 June 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 December 2015.

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

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

Pupils are very happy at this school. During my visit, pupils proudly told me that their school was 'special'. In particular, they are appreciative of the help and support that staff give. Pupils say that lessons are 'great' and that they have lots of opportunities to do fun things outside of lessons. For example, at the end of the school day, pupils in the athletics club vigorously participated in an aerobic dance session. The school's motto, 'Together we learn, together we grow', is embodied by all, as seen with the teachers joining in with the pupils and their dancing, much to the pupils' enjoyment and delight! Pupils told me that they really appreciate the extra opportunities the school provides. They enjoy the fact that they can run their own clubs, such as the arts council. Your focus on providing an engaging curriculum, while also promoting high aspiration through the house system, is developing eager learners who want to be the best they can be.

Parents also spoke enthusiastically about staff, saying that teachers do a 'grand job' and support parents well. Several parents spoke about the workshop sessions to support their children's learning at home. This is helping parents to understand the importance of good reading habits. In addition, parents support the school's key focus for development by helping to improve their children's arithmetic through the regular mathematics homework.

Leaders were disappointed with the mathematics results last year and have robustly

implemented a series of changes which are now having impact. Leaders and governors are in agreement that there is still more to do to ensure that all pupils fulfil their potential in this area. Governors hold school leaders to account effectively. Governors ask pertinent and challenging questions and test out the information they are given through seeking a range of views from staff, pupils, other local schools and the local authority. They recognise that they should compare disadvantaged pupils' progress to that of other pupils nationally as well as to the progress of their peers.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

As the designated lead for safeguarding you have ensured that all arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are effective. You are vigilant when liaising with external agencies and other schools when there are concerns. You make careful checks on the suitability of adults to work with pupils. Members of staff and governors are trained in safer recruitment. Leaders regularly review the quality of safeguarding arrangements, involving the safeguarding governor as appropriate. Reports and actions are monitored by the full governing body.

You and the staff ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, safe and caring environment. Pupils told me that they feel safe in school and trust adults to help them. They say that bullying rarely happens. Pupils told me that if it does occur, it is dealt with quickly. Pupils are aware of the potential dangers when using the internet. Knowing the school's rules well, pupils said that if they ever viewed anything on the internet that made them feel unsafe, they would tell an adult. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey agree that their children are safe at school.

### **Inspection findings**

- Attainment in mathematics was below national expectations last year. Boys performed particularly less well than other boys nationally. As a result, school leaders, along with the local authority, undertook a root and branch review of the school's provision in this area. They found that pupils were struggling with word problems and mental arithmetic, and too often pupils' misconceptions were not addressed fully by teachers.
- Extensive staff training has ensured consistency in approach so that all pupils are shown what to do, are able to practise with a friend and can try exercises independently. This is helping to build pupils' confidence when learning new concepts. Extra mathematics sessions and access to Year 6 pupils who act as coaches are helping those who are less sure.
- The revamped curriculum is helping pupils practise their skills repeatedly, in so doing, reinforcing key knowledge and understanding. At the same time, well-planned tasks that increase in difficulty are adding enjoyment to pupils' learning. For example, a pupil enthusiastically showed me how he created extra challenge for himself when completing a reflection with 14 points of transference.
- While pupils' exercise books demonstrate that they are gaining appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding for their age, pupils sometimes make errors

with word problems as they have not understood the mathematical language in the longer questions.

- Like their peers, disadvantaged pupils also did not perform well in mathematics last year. However, they also did not reach national expectations in reading and writing. Current pupils' work shows that disadvantaged pupils are progressing well, particularly so in writing.
- Subject leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. For example, they funded a summer reading scheme to extend pupils' vocabulary and to help instil a love of reading. The disadvantaged pupils who read to me have good reading habits, reading daily and reading a wide range of texts.
- Reading has a high profile in the school. All pupils I spoke to said they enjoyed reading. A pupil with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) was most proud of the thickness of the book he was reading just like his peers. A most able pupil told me fervently that the 'books are always better than the films... 2000 leagues under the sea was just awful as a film'. Another pupil spoke animatedly about the image of the 'jubilee of birds', linking it to celebrations like that of the queen's jubilee in the book 'Charlotte's Web'.
- Leaders showcase the reading curriculum with other providers. For example, the choice of text for pupils with SEND is linked to the choice of texts for the mainstream pupils. This is so pupils with SEND can benefit from contextual conversations in lessons. For example, when pupils were learning about the poem 'The Highwayman' pupils with SEND read 'The Highway Rat' and thus could engage with the concepts and themes that were being discussed.
- The previous inspection report recommended that teachers set appropriately difficult activities for the most able pupils and for subject leaders to check on the quality of teaching. These have been addressed by leaders. For example, in a Year 5 history lesson pupils were given tasks that made the pupils think about the products of the Vikings and what they were used for. This encouraged pupils to explore and evaluate ideas. Pupils were incredulous at the ice skates made out of bone.
- The work in most-able pupils' books also shows interesting and creative responses to a wide variety of challenging tasks. For example, from a Year 6 pupil's potion for 'muting a sibling' to a Year 3 pupil's writing where 'Sleeping, mum and the children's dreams were drenched by a waterfall of worry.'
- Middle leaders have a good understanding of their areas of responsibility. They have been empowered through effective support from senior leaders as well as being given time to discharge their duties fully. They have a clear sense of what is working well and what needs to improve further. School leaders are proactive in liaising with other schools to share best practice and their view is to work together to be the best they can be for the good of the community.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of mathematics is strengthened so that pupils can apply effectively their mathematical skills, in particular addressing pupils' misunderstanding readily and developing pupils' understanding of mathematical language so they can solve word problems
- disadvantaged pupils' attainment continues to improve so that disadvantaged pupils perform in line with national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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

Yours sincerely

Liz Smith  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this one-day inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher, the office manager, a group of subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, and five members of the governing body, including the chair. I also spoke to parents and a representative of the local authority. I held discussions with a group of pupils from all year groups. I listened to 10 pupils read from a range of year groups. I visited lessons with you to look at the effect of your work to improve the quality of teaching. During lesson visits, I sampled pupils' books and talked to pupils about their learning and progress. I looked in detail at some pupils' work from across a broad range of subjects in order to evaluate the progress that pupils have made over time. I took account of the 30 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 34 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning, its policies and other information available on the school's website. I focused particularly on the progress of pupils currently in the school, the quality and breadth of the school's curriculum and the quality of leadership and management, including governance. I also looked closely at the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.