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Mr C Jones  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Jones

### **Short inspection of Bruche Primary School Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 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 became an academy on 1 September 2016.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Your clear and focused leadership has been at the heart of the improvements in this successful school. You have established a caring and calm ethos that contributes to pupils learning well. Your high aspirations are shared by staff and governors. Pupils strive to live up to the school motto: 'Success, nothing less'.

Governors are exceptionally proud of the school. They have a wide set of skills that they use very effectively to challenge and support you. Governors have a precise understanding of the school's effectiveness because of activities such as their regular visits to review the school improvement priorities and to talk to pupils about their learning. As part of the multi-academy trust (MAT) they benefit well from the opportunity to work with governors from other schools to share good practice and expertise.

Most parents and carers who spoke with me commented positively on the school. They feel well informed through the regular newsletters and texts that they receive, particularly parents of children in the early years and key stage 1. They also feel

better informed about how they can help their children at home, particularly with their mathematics and phonics. Parents appreciate the many activities you provide for their children. They say that their children are happy and enjoy coming to school. Parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) commented positively about the help your staff give to the whole family.

Pupils are extremely polite and well-mannered. They behave exceptionally well in class and around the school. Good relationships, fostered by adults in school, contribute to pupils' positive attitudes to learning. They appreciate the wide range of clubs they can attend, including sports clubs, learning to play a musical instrument and baking club. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about the gardening club, which has been growing a variety of flowers and vegetables which will be planted out and entered in the local horticultural show at Tatton Park. As a result of strong provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, pupils' understanding of British values is well developed. Pupils take their responsibilities as monitors and members of committees very seriously. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the interesting places they visit in the local area which help them with their learning. A prime example is the work that they are doing with a local zoo on the protection of endangered animals and animal conservation. Pupils who spoke to me said that 'School is special because everyone is made to feel welcome.'

During the inspection, we looked at several key lines of enquiry linked to previous priorities for school improvement. Leaders ensure that staff have the knowledge and understanding they need to support pupils' learning effectively. You have established an enthusiastic and highly skilled staff within a culture of professional dialogue. Staff feel valued and morale is high. They appreciate the opportunity to share knowledge and expertise with colleagues, including colleagues in other schools within the MAT. This is especially important for staff new to teaching. Staff have many opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills and pursue additional leadership responsibilities. Leaders review the progress pupils make and routinely check on the quality of teaching. They challenge staff effectively and provide support when necessary. As a result, the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils are consistently high across the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The strong culture of safeguarding within the school ensures that all procedures are effective. Leaders diligently check all adults in school are safe to work with children. Staff are thorough in checking visitors' identities on entry. All records are extremely detailed and securely kept. High-quality training contributes to staff's and governors' good understanding of safeguarding procedures and of their responsibilities. Leaders work very effectively with other agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive guidance and support when necessary.

Pupils with whom I spoke said that behaviour is good. Pupils understand the different forms bullying can take and spoke confidently that if it occurred it would be dealt with swiftly. They feel very safe in school and know that there will always be someone to talk with should they have any worries or concerns. The curriculum

provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about staying safe in a variety of situations including learning about road safety and how to keep safe when playing out with their friends in the local area. Pupils also know how to keep themselves safe when they are using the internet.

## **Inspection findings**

- The first key line of enquiry was about the changes you have made to the way reading is taught. Leaders identified that for many pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, their exposure to a rich vocabulary was limited. Leaders' secure knowledge about how vocabulary should be taught has ensured teachers have the necessary knowledge and understanding to improve pupils' reading and vocabulary knowledge. Carefully selected texts and well-designed activities ignite pupils' curiosity and develop their vocabulary extremely well. For example, in Year 5, pupils have gained knowledge of previously unfamiliar words through researching the meanings of the words and discussing the author's rationale for selecting highly emotive language when persuading the public to save endangered species. Teachers challenge pupils to use adventurous and ambitious vocabulary in their own writing. Pupils talk confidently, demonstrating a good understanding of the vocabulary selected and the impact it has on the reader.
- Pupils who are struggling with reading are given the help they need from highly skilled staff. Staff use probing questions effectively to encourage pupils to develop and expand on their explanations and ideas. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the books they have read. They appreciate the opportunity to select books at the 'book swop stop', and the online software which enables them to practise their fluency and comprehension skills through carefully selected texts. For the last two years, the proportion of pupils who achieve well in their reading at the end of key stage 2 has been above the national figure including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Next, I was interested to see how leaders provide opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding in English and mathematics in other curriculum subjects. Leaders have worked with other schools within the MAT to design and implement a curriculum that provides first-hand experiences for pupils. In science, older pupils talked enthusiastically about their visits to the zoo as part of their work on habitats. They applied their skills and knowledge to interpret graphs and charts about deforestation, rainfall and climates. In history, younger pupils explained that the Great Fire of London spread so quickly because the houses were made of wood, and 'wood burns easily'. Work in pupils' books showed clearly how they applied their vocabulary knowledge when researching and presenting information about what it was like to be a soldier in Roman Britain. However, this practical approach to the curriculum is not fully embedded across all subjects.
- We also discussed how phonics is taught. The proportion of pupils who achieve well in the phonics screening check is consistently above the national figure. Phonics is taught very effectively from Nursery. Teachers' strong subject knowledge and pupils' positive attitudes to learning contribute to the extremely good progress pupils make. Leaders check that phonics is taught systematically,

building on pupils' prior learning. Teachers use assessment effectively during lessons to identify pupils who are struggling. Teachers give all pupils, including those with SEND, the help they need to catch up quickly. Pupils apply their phonic knowledge accurately. Reading resources match the phonic skills of pupils well and provide pupils with increasingly challenging vocabulary. Pupils who read with me said they enjoy reading and many read at home to family members. Over time, pupils become skilful and competent readers.

- Finally, we looked at attendance. Attendance overall is above the national average because leaders give it a high priority within school. Pupils explained the importance of attending school each day and how missing school affects their learning. Attendance is monitored carefully, particularly for the small number of pupils who are persistently absent from school. Staff take swift action, including telephone calls and visits to the home, if pupils do not arrive at school on time. Staff engage well with families and work effectively with charities, other agencies and professionals to ensure that families receive the help and guidance they need. Regular meetings with parents, and a range of rewards and incentives, have had a positive impact on reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent and attendance for this group of pupils is improving.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- ensure the newly designed curriculum so that pupils' knowledge and skills in other curriculum subjects are at least as good as their knowledge and skills in English and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Warrington. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Stringer  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you, other members of the leadership team and staff. I also spoke with members of the board of governors. I visited classrooms with you, where I had the opportunity to speak with pupils and look at their work. I met with a group of pupils formally during the day and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. There was no response to the staff's or the pupils' online questionnaire. I considered 22 free-text comments and the 30 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the single central record.