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Mr Ian Bolton
Headteacher
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Carpenters Lane
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Dear Mr Bolton

Short inspection of Bratton Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 2017, 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

You have ensured that the good quality of education identified at the previous inspection has been maintained. Since you became headteacher in 2015, you have built on the existing strengths to improve the school further. You have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. These were to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills; to improve links with parents and pre-schools; and to improve pupils' attitudes towards learning. These are now all strengths of the school. In addition, you have improved other aspects of the school's performance.

A key feature of this improvement has been that all pupils, from Reception through to Year 6, are keen to learn. They enjoy coming to school. They also feel very safe and well cared for.

I spoke to several parents during the inspection and read comments which others submitted. The great majority were very positive about the changes you have brought about. Typical of parental comments was the statement that, 'My daughter has made excellent progress. I am very happy with the school's adoption and promotion of positive learning attitudes.' Another parent commented, 'My children have become more confident and self-aware, active learners... The headteacher has a clear vision and is incredibly supportive of the students under his care, as well as of the parents.'

Pupils, staff and parents all believe that behaviour in lessons and around the school

is very good most of the time. Teachers and support staff take advantage of the close family ethos in the school, which I saw for myself during the inspection, to help pupils learn well. Pupils support each other.

All groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or vulnerable, make good progress. Pupils benefit from the breakfast club and the recently established after-school club. You acknowledge the expressed wish of some parents and pupils to have more clubs and trips to further enrich pupils' positive experience of the school.

The governing body has several new members. Governors know the school very well. They support your drive towards excellence and ask searching questions, for example about the impact of pupil premium funding on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Governors actively hold you and other staff to account for progress. They recognise that because of several recent changes in staffing, you have taken on most of the leadership responsibilities yourself. You acknowledge that this is not ideal, which is why the development of leadership at subject level is prominent in the school development plan.

You have made sure that teachers and support staff benefit from regular opportunities to develop their teaching skills further. This has been a key factor in pupils making good progress during the past two years, as evident in national assessments. The work that pupils currently do in the school shows that the school is continuing to build on this good progress. This is also highlighted in the school's own assessment data.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school has appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure safety. You, governors and other staff make sure that all arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and are of an appropriately high quality.

Staff liaise well with external agencies when additional support is needed to help vulnerable pupils, for example over attendance. Parents greatly value this support.

Staff and governors are trained in all aspects of keeping children safe. You work closely with parents to promote pupils' safety by, for example, giving parents advice on safe use of the internet. This care contributes to the strong culture of safeguarding in the school.

You have ensured that there is a good awareness of more recent national concerns about issues such as extremism and radicalisation. Adults know how they should recognise and deal with any concerns.

You make good use of the local authority's expertise to monitor the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures.

Inspection findings

- In addition to safeguarding, we agreed three lines of enquiry at the start of the inspection. The first was to check the progress of pupils learning phonics in Year 1. Although children in Reception and pupils higher up the school have made good progress overall during the past two years, the results of the Year 1 phonics check were below the national expectation in 2016.
- You recognised the reasons for this, which were partly due to changes in staffing. You have taken effective measures to deal with the issue. Staff have benefited from training in the effective teaching of phonics, and from support within school and from elsewhere. The school has reviewed its resources and further developed the library. Improved liaison between Reception and Year 1 has promoted higher and more consistent expectations.
- Your prompt response to the results has led to an improvement in pupils' understanding and skills in phonics. Pupils currently in key stage 1 are now on track to do better in the assessments. This improvement can also be seen in pupils' writing and reading.
- The second line of enquiry concerned attendance. Although above average for the school as a whole, last year the attendance of a small number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was poor and below average. Since last year, the situation has improved markedly. Staff, including the inclusion manager, have worked hard to emphasise to parents the importance of regular attendance. Initiatives such as the breakfast club have also helped to secure improvements.
- Attendance overall, in the current school year, remains above the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils as a group is now above average. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is now high. It is above that of other pupils in the school and well above the national average.
- The final line of enquiry was about the relative progress of boys and girls throughout the school. Although in the previous two years pupils as a whole made good progress by the time they left school, there have been some inconsistencies. For example, previously girls made faster progress in reading, whereas boys made progress faster than girls in mathematics. The information has to be treated with care, because the number of pupils in each year group is small.
- The gaps between the rates of progress of boys and girls in mathematics and reading have narrowed. This is partly due to the school's efforts to raise expectations and improve teachers' expertise in these subjects. It has also resulted from better use of early intervention by staff to provide additional support for pupils.
- The school's efforts to improve writing for all pupils have paid off, such that progress in writing is now one of the strengths of the school. I saw this in the quality of written work in pupils' books.
- Almost all pupils make at least the expected level of progress in all subjects, and many are on track to exceed this by the end of the year, in all year groups.

However, the school is not complacent. You recognise that although the most able pupils make good progress as a group, a few could attain at a higher level and make even more progress if given more challenge. You have already made it an objective in the school improvement plan to increase the progress of the most able.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers raise their expectations of the most able pupils even further so that they can consistently fulfil their potential in the range of subjects across the curriculum
- the role of middle leaders develops and promotes a consistent level of progression and challenge in all subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

John Laver
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and your inclusion manager. I met two members of the governing body, including the chair. I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I talked to several parents at the start of the school day. I analysed the school's surveys of parents and the online responses to Parent View. I also read several comments submitted to me by parents. I read the Ofsted surveys completed by pupils and staff. I visited most of the classrooms with you to see what pupils were doing in lessons. I carried out an extensive survey of pupils' work to see what progress they were making, and I analysed the school's data on pupils' progress. I reviewed records relating to attendance and safeguarding. I also read local authority reports on the school and looked at the minutes of governing body meetings.