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Mr Paul Stephens  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Stephens

### **Short inspection of Broughton Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 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 your school was judged to be good in January 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since then, a new deputy headteacher has joined the school and there have been several changes to the teaching team. Working in close cooperation with governors, you have strengthened leadership with the appointment of a non-class-based inclusion leader and an interim headteacher to provide additional support in preparation for your phased retirement.

You have built on the strengths of teaching over time by providing support to staff to help them to develop their practice. You have engaged purposefully with the wider school community by visiting other schools to research the best practice. You have made effective use of advice and support from Buckinghamshire Learning Trust advisers. This allows you to develop the skills of leaders at all levels and so build strong leadership capacity. You have reflected successfully on the way in which writing and mathematics is taught and introduced new ideas that are engaging for both staff and pupils. Staff have welcomed these changes enthusiastically. Your priorities for improvement are rooted in your thorough analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's performance.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They say staff are caring and kind and so pupils feel safe and secure. One pupil reflected the views of others with his comment, 'I like how all the adults help you. It's the best school ever.' You have created a climate of trust and respect that values all pupils regardless of circumstances. Your own school values mirror British values and so pupils learn to

respect each other and show tolerance and understanding of the faiths and beliefs of others. Inclusion is a real strength of the school, with pupils having equal opportunities to succeed and to take part in all aspects of school life. Pupils are polite, friendly and very well mannered. They demonstrate good, and sometimes exemplary, behaviour in class and when moving around the school. Pupils attend school regularly and few are persistently absent.

Governors know the school well. They have an accurate view of the school because they are provided with comprehensive performance information. They use this to provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge to leaders. Governors are outward-looking and encourage leaders to innovate and to try new methods that support pupils' learning. Their meetings are well organised and governors fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously. Governors are enthusiastic and rightly very proud of their school.

At the time of the last inspection you were asked to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards, particularly in writing. During my visits to classrooms with you and other senior leaders, we saw pupils in all year groups who were thoroughly enjoying success in their writing. For example, pupils in Year 4 were converting parts of a text into a play script. This was based on 'James and the giant peach' by Roald Dahl, a story that they had read and enjoyed. Pupils wrote an imaginary conversation between a grasshopper, a centipede and an earthworm as a play script. This stimulated lively discussion and allowed pupils to make good progress towards creating an effective dialogue. Work in pupils' books shows that across all year groups they make good progress in developing their ability to write fluently and confidently for a variety of purposes. There are plenty of examples to show how they write frequently in other subjects, often to a high standard. However, there are times when pupils' handwriting is untidy and they do not all present their work to a consistently high standard and this detracts from the overall quality of their work. Moreover, there is room to improve the quality of teaching further by ensuring that pupils understand fully what is expected of them in lessons and are sufficiently challenged by learning tasks, particularly in mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Meticulous checks are made on staff, governors and visitors to ensure that pupils are safe at school. The designated safeguarding lead officers are well trained and provide regular and appropriate child protection training to staff. Staff have also been trained in relevant initiatives including the 'Prevent' duty and keeping children safe from the risk of radicalisation. All staff are fully aware of what they need to do should they have a concern that a child may be at risk from harm. There are good arrangements with external agencies, including children's services, to ensure that pupils are provided with the right help in a timely way.

Pupils said they feel safe in school and spoke about the regular fire drills, and lock-down procedures to be followed in the event of an incident. Pupils know about

dangers associated with modern technology as well as how to stay safe from potential risks such as when crossing roads, and those posed by tobacco and some non-medicinal drugs. Pupils know about different forms of bullying but say that any sign of bullying is immediately dealt with. They say that adults listen to them and take their concerns seriously. Pupils know that they are in safe hands at school.

## **Inspection findings**

- In addition to checking the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements, I evaluated the impact of actions taken by leaders to improve pupils' progress in writing and in mathematics. I considered how well the most able disadvantaged pupils are progressing. I also assessed how well school leaders have addressed the issues for improvement since the previous inspection.
- Pupils across the school now make good progress in writing. In response to the disappointing results in writing in 2016, school leaders and governors took immediate action to raise standards. They asked Buckinghamshire Learning Trust to provide training for staff, and staff visited other schools to learn from best practice. Teachers have made successful changes to their practice as a result, including developing the range of books pupils read and increasing opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills more regularly.
- Work in classrooms, as well as in pupils' books, shows that pupils now enjoy writing across a range of subjects and for a variety of purposes. For example, in Year 5 pupils were learning how to construct a balanced argument based on the book, 'The tower to the sun' by Colin Thompson. Pupils actively debated and argued, exchanging their ideas based on issues raised by the story. They reflected on right and wrong, using evidence to support their point of view in preparation for their own writing. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed this activity and looked forward to writing their own balanced argument.
- As a result of actions taken by school leaders, pupils across the school make good progress in writing. However, teachers do not make it consistently clear to pupils what exactly they are learning. Consequently, pupils sometimes do not understand the purpose of the tasks which teachers set.
- School leaders acted quickly to reverse the key stage 2 decline in mathematics in 2016. They introduced a new programme to teach mathematics and they provided helpful training for staff. This has raised teachers' expectations for what pupils can do, and so teachers provide challenging work for pupils. Each mathematics lesson builds upon and extends what pupils already know, so that they build their skills systematically. Teachers have become increasingly skilled both in responding to what pupils have to say and in promoting effective learning.
- The quality and quantity of work in most pupils' exercise books reflect teachers' high expectations. Teachers also regularly exploit opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical understanding to other subjects, including science where they record temperatures and create pie charts based on collected data. Following on from consolidating calculation strategies, pupils use their

understanding to solve problems and to develop their reasoning skills. They apply their knowledge across a range of mathematical concepts and so progress well from their starting points. However, occasionally pupils spend too much time practising concepts that they have already mastered and are not moved on quickly enough. This slows their progress.

- School leaders have introduced an appropriate system to record and track pupils' progress in writing and mathematics. All teachers have been trained to assess pupils' work accurately and to record their progress electronically. This helps them to see where the pupils have gaps in their learning and to take immediate action to address these gaps. All teachers are held to account for pupils' progress, particularly in writing and mathematics, and this has helped to raise standards in these subjects. Teachers meet with staff from other local schools and compare their assessments to wisely validate the accuracy of their judgements.
- In the past year, school leaders have created a comprehensive pupil premium strategy to show how they plan to meet the learning and social and emotional needs of disadvantaged pupils. This helpful strategy identifies the specific barriers to learning that some of these pupils face, together with proposed actions to help them to overcome their difficulties. All staff have a clear understanding of the differing needs of their disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able. They have the support of the pupil premium coordinator to help them to enrich the learning experiences for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, the most able disadvantaged pupils achieve well.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' work is presented to consistently high standards
- teachers ensure that pupils understand what is required when completing tasks
- tasks are routinely sufficiently challenging, particularly in mathematics, for those pupils who are ready to move on more quickly.

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

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and your senior leadership team to agree the key lines of enquiry and discuss your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I visited all classrooms, accompanied by you or one of the senior leaders to observe pupils working. I looked at samples of pupils' work in mathematics and writing. I met with an adviser from the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust and, later, with six governors. I spoke to pupils around the school and met with a group of pupils more formally. There were too few responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, to take these into account. I checked the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements, including those relating to recruitment.