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Mrs Amy Husband  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Husband

### **Short inspection of Clifford Bridge Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 15 May 2018, 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 predecessor 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.

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.

Together with the executive principal and the senior leadership team, you have ensured that life at Clifford Bridge Academy is exciting and engaging for all. Pupils, staff and governors share a common vision that good is not good enough. Pupils love learning and talk enthusiastically about their exciting lessons.

Following the last inspection, under the strategic leadership of the executive principal and the trust, the school has gone from strength to strength. Since your appointment in September 2016, your inspirational leadership has helped the school to improve further.

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to make teaching outstanding by ensuring that lessons were suitably demanding for pupils of all abilities, particularly the most able.

Leaders were also asked to ensure that pupils were encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning.

The report also recommended that a covered area was provided for the Reception class outdoor area, which is now in place.

Leaders were also asked to ensure that middle leaders' skills were developed so that they were better able to evaluate the quality of teaching, and that existing good and outstanding practice should be shared more effectively.

Leadership has been strengthened considerably since the last inspection. Together with the executive principal, you have ensured that there is a strong focus on continuous improvement. As a result of your commitment to staff development, teachers are rising to the challenge of leadership and taking ownership of the progress of pupils in their classes. They embrace the opportunity to take on additional responsibility. Existing leaders nurture future leaders. As a result, you grow your own talent and succession planning is built into a very strategic model of school improvement.

Internal monitoring indicates that the majority of teaching is now outstanding. Work in pupils' books demonstrates that pupils make strong progress. External reports verify these judgements. Learning tasks and success criteria are now clearly set to meet the needs of pupils' starting points, with 'chilli' challenges offering the highest level of challenge. Pupils respond well to this increased challenge and, as a result, they make very good progress.

Outcomes have improved considerably at greater depth at key stage 1 and at the higher standard at key stage 2, particularly in mathematics. In lessons, teachers ask more challenging questions to ensure that all pupils make good progress, including the most able.

All staff have ownership of their own professional development and the assessment of their own performance through 'flipped' monitoring. Teachers assess their own performance, which is moderated and quality-assured by senior and middle leaders. Staff set their own improvement targets and are motivated to be the best they can be. Outstanding practice is shared frequently to help everyone to improve. Teachers and other staff are proud to work here and feel valued and well supported.

Pupils' independence and initiative are actively encouraged. All efforts and achievements are recognised and celebrated, not only academic but creative, sporting and other successes. The school council is actively involved in improving the school. For example, it produces a children's school evaluation which is published on the website. In extended homework projects, pupils choose how to interpret the brief, carry out research and sometimes work with their parents or carers to complete models, presentations or projects to demonstrate their learning. The displays of pupils' work around the school show how this brings learning to life.

Pupils are articulate and confident. They take ownership over their own learning,

setting themselves challenging targets to improve their work. All pupils, even in Reception, are able to explain what they are learning and why, as well as how they know how well they are doing. As a result, pupils achieve very well in this highly effective setting.

Governors know the school well. They share the commitment to continuous development. They do not take at face value what they are told but visit the school to verify what leaders tell them. They take steps to develop their own skills by carrying out a skills audit each year. Enhanced support and training have been purchased to ensure that they keep up to date with key developments.

Staff well-being is a high priority at Clifford Bridge. You recognise that, in order to recruit and retain the best teachers and other staff, you need to invest in their development and protect their work-life balance. You have put in place a policy to restrict emails outside working hours. You have also introduced a streamlined approach to lesson planning to reduce teachers' workload.

Parents enthusiastically praise all aspects of the school. Many parents who responded to the online survey Parent View wrote at length about how their child enjoys learning, as well as the wide range of opportunities for personal development and well-being. They praised the commitment of the staff and the caring atmosphere. Among the many positive comments, one parent said: 'I feel blessed that my children get to experience the rich and diverse educational experience that is provided.' Another said, 'I can't fault the school'. Pupils say that Clifford Bridge is 'an awesome school'.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Safeguarding practice is thorough and secure. Records are rigorously kept up to date. The school uses an electronic system to capture data on individual pupils about all aspects of school life, including behaviour, exclusions, attendance and safeguarding. This enables leaders to analyse data in detail and spot any changes quickly. They meet regularly as a pastoral team to identify any patterns and trends and take effective action, working closely with parents so that they are fully consulted.

Parents, pupils and staff all confirmed that pupils are safe. Pupils feel safe and say there is no bullying. Parents' comments were overwhelmingly positive. One parent captured the views of many by saying: 'The support is amazing for the ones who find things difficult, the teachers are patient and never too busy to talk to you.'

### **Inspection findings**

- The thematic curriculum is inspiring. Each topic starts with an experiential learning experience to engage the pupils. For example, pupils visited Mary Arden's House this week to kick-start a topic on the Tudors. Pupils ran a bistro for parents as part of their project on 'world kitchen'. These meaningful

experiences help pupils to absorb their learning more effectively. Pupils are inspired and, as a result, they produce excellent pieces of writing which come from their hearts.

- Substantial improvements in teaching and learning have brought about sustained improvements year on year since the last inspection. Attainment by the end of key stage 2 was above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics in 2017. Current pupils are making above-average rates of progress.
- Much has been done to improve the quality of teaching since the last inspection. All teachers follow the school's revised marking policy. In some classes, the teachers' high expectations of presentation and care in pupils' work are not consistent in all subjects across the curriculum.
- Leaders identified improving progress as an area for development. Leaders and governors recognise that this is a challenge when pupils achieve so well lower down the school, but they are focused on further improvements at the higher standard to ensure that all pupils achieve to their highest potential.
- Governors are rigorous in their monitoring of the impact of additional funding. They work closely with leaders to evaluate the impact of interventions thoroughly to ensure that pupils get the best support for their needs from the available resources. The lead teacher for pupil premium meets with every eligible child to identify their specific needs, interests and barriers to learning. As a result, disadvantaged pupils achieve well and the differences between them and other pupils are diminishing.
- Although the increasingly diverse range of pupils' needs represent a challenge, all staff are keen to ensure that they are able to provide the right support at the right time for all pupils to make the best possible progress.
- The school has achieved the Quality Lead Mark for 'Achievement for All', a programme committed to improving outcomes for disadvantaged young people. This commitment to equality underpins the school's approach to inclusion. All pupils are welcome here. Since September 2017, there have been no fixed-term exclusions. Pupils whose behaviour has previously been a barrier to their learning are supported very well to stay in school and become successful and enthusiastic learners. The curriculum is modified to accommodate pupils' needs, for example taking the good practice from the early years to adapt teaching in key stage 1 for those pupils who need a different approach.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Leaders are pleased to welcome all pupils and provide intensive support for staff to ensure that behaviour is seen as a symptom of wider needs. Staff work tirelessly to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. Attendance overall is above the national average and no group of pupils is disadvantaged by poor attendance.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the high expectations of pupils' pride in their work are consistently applied by all staff in all subjects
- staff receive ongoing support to understand the increasingly diverse needs of the school's changing population so that all barriers to learning are removed and all pupils make the best possible progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Spilsbury  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and the executive principal to discuss the school evaluation and development plan. We also discussed the key lines of enquiry I had identified prior to the inspection, which broadly matched the areas for development you had identified in your school evaluation. We also discussed the areas for improvement from the last inspection report and the impact of actions you have taken to address these.

I scrutinised a range of documents, including the single central record, safeguarding procedures, monitoring records, external school improvement reports, pupils' work, reports on attendance and exclusions and assessment information.

I also met with the chair of governors and other governors, along with a director of the Inspire Multi-Academy Trust.

I visited lessons with you and spoke to pupils about their learning. I spoke to pupils at breaktime and asked them what they liked about school and how they learn to keep themselves safe. I took account of 18 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. I also took account of 107 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 76 free-text responses.