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Mrs Rebecca Chessell  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Chessell

### **Short inspection of Binstead Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 26 June 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 the school was judged to be good in June 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following your arrival in September 2017, you spared no time in getting to know your new school by engaging with pupils, parents and staff. The community has welcomed the improvements you have driven during the past academic year. You have accurately and comprehensively identified those aspects of the school with potential to improve and set in place a number of initiatives to benefit pupils. Your senior leadership team and governors share your ambitions and are enthusiastically supporting your drive for the school's future. You describe the school's recent developments as 'part of a journey'. The inspection evidence shows that the school is well on its way to fulfil the vision you have newly agreed with the school community.

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly school. They like and respect their teachers and appreciate their interesting lessons and activities. Pupils told me that the school has become an even better place to learn this year because of the greater range of opportunities and events. Pupils especially enjoy the emphasis on sport and physical education. Many pupils look forward to the active start to the day that takes place before school on three mornings a week. One pupil neatly summed this up as 'wake up and shake up' because it helps everyone to concentrate and learn. Pupils are justifiably proud of their artwork, much of which is displayed in the shared areas. Recently, they have enjoyed finding out about important global issues, such as the dangers of single-use plastics and deforestation. Pupils show a depth of understanding by recognising that solutions to such issues are complex because of

the different livelihoods that are affected.

You have promoted high-quality staff training by making effective use of the local authority's expertise to improve teaching and learning in both English and mathematics. Teachers have introduced some new approaches to learning during the current academic year that engage pupils well. At the school's last inspection, inspectors identified the need to develop middle leaders. As a result of recent training, alongside your support, middle leaders are increasingly able to steer improvement actions. They have begun to evaluate how successful these initiatives are by measuring the impact on the progress of different groups of pupils. Wisely, you realise that you need more time before you can judge what is working best for specific groups.

Leaders have addressed other areas for improvement from the previous inspection by ensuring that the most able pupils meet appropriate challenges in all of their work. In recent years, a greater proportion of pupils has achieved the higher standard in mathematics than nationally, as well as in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Your current plans show that you remain alert to the needs of the most able pupils in all subject areas.

A committed governing body supports the school. Governors are better placed to provide challenge to senior leaders as a result of the detailed information they now have, informing them of pupils' rates of progress. Governors are aware that they need to use this information to develop their monitoring role further in order to contribute actively to the school's future development.

Almost all parents who communicated their views during the inspection were positive about the school. One parent summed up the school for many by describing Binstead Primary as 'an excellent school and getting even better'. Parents of children in the early years are particularly pleased with how well their children are learning. A typical comment from a parent described their child as 'happy at school, well-educated and well looked after,' and added, 'I couldn't ask for any more.'

A few parents raised concerns with me about the support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. I looked carefully at progress information and work in English books for some pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. I saw that, in general, they have made strong academic progress during the current year because leaders check that this group of pupils is well supported by their teachers and other adults. You are aware that for a minority of pupils their needs could be even more precisely met. Your future plans include further development of the school's provision to meet the needs of the few pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Keeping pupils safe from harm is at the forefront of everyone's work. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and a high standard of care and concern for pupils' well-being permeate the school. As the

school's designated safeguarding lead, you have delivered comprehensive training for staff and governors and all staff have regular safeguarding updates so they can recognise signs of abuse.

Pupils say they feel safe at school and their parents agree. Pupils also learn to keep themselves safe. For example, older pupils have a mature understanding of the risks of being online because teachers make sure they have regular reminders. Older pupils understand about different types of bullying and why it is harmful. Pupils of all ages know what to do if bullying happens. They are confident that they can talk to any adult in school and ask for help to resolve their concerns or anxieties.

Pupils care for each other and learn to be considerate. Older pupils like helping younger pupils and those who have particular needs. They recognise that some pupils need more support than others. Teachers are alert to pupils' safety, which parents appreciate. For example, they ensure that Reception children are protected from the sun when they are in the outside area.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, agreed during our initial meeting. I reviewed with leaders: the actions to improve pupils' writing; how well the school meets the needs of the relatively small number of disadvantaged pupils; and the effectiveness of actions to enable more pupils to make good progress, including by enabling more pupils to reach the higher standards.
- In recent years, pupils have left the school at the end of key stage 2 having made progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics that is in line with all pupils nationally. In 2017, there was a decline in pupils' rates of progress in writing. This resulted in the leadership team's sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning in English.
- During the past year, reading and writing have become linked through pupils' immersion in interesting literature that inspires them to develop as writers. When we visited classrooms and looked at workbooks, we saw how pupils have progressively developed their skills from lesson to lesson. This new approach began to make a very positive difference to pupils' writing during the spring term. Throughout the school, teachers help pupils to think about the purpose of their writing and how to make it appeal to a reader. Pupils select sophisticated vocabulary, when they are reading, to use in their own writing. They are also developing greater grammatical accuracy. Year 6 pupils' work shows they have developed impressive skills for editing and improving their own work.
- In the past, boys' writing has not been as strong as that of girls. Teachers have ensured that some of the literature topics have a particular attraction for boys. Many pupils, including boys, told me that they now enjoy writing because teachers have helped them to know how to write. Pupils are proud of their finished pieces of work. Leaders report that boys are catching up in writing to achieve the milestones that they have set for each age group. Girls are also

improving their skills at the same rate and an increasing number are on track to reach the higher standard.

- There is a relatively small number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group. In previous years, their progress has been weaker than that of other pupils, both within school and compared to pupils nationally. Consequently, leaders rigorously review how each disadvantaged pupil is doing by ensuring they are at the top of the agenda during termly discussions about pupils' progress. When pupils are falling behind, actions are taken to remove barriers so they can catch up. Teachers give well-matched learning tasks that enable most disadvantaged pupils to achieve as well as other pupils who have the same starting points.
- We saw in pupils' workbooks that some learning tasks, especially in English, motivate low-attaining pupils more than others. Progress for these pupils is sometimes inconsistent. We also agreed that, on occasion, learning time is not consistently well used for some groups of pupils, such as the most able.
- In mathematics, your leaders showed me that teachers give pupils opportunities to apply what they know, solve challenging problems and explain their thinking and methods. Most pupils move on to harder work in a timely way when they are adept with a particular calculation method.
- You have introduced stronger systems for leaders to use to check on the progress of all pupils, as well as on their attainment. This is helping pupils to achieve the highest possible standards. Leaders' close scrutiny of pupils' progress supports their discussions with class teachers so that teaching input and learning tasks can be adjusted to meet individuals' needs. There is already a positive impact from this work. We saw in classrooms and in pupils' workbooks that almost all are making strong progress.
- The school's assessment information indicates that, over time, standards are on track to improve. Your middle leaders support your determination to improve teaching and learning so that pupils of all abilities are consistently challenged. This will enable low-attaining and high-attaining pupils to make the same good progress.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching and learning time is used consistently well, particularly for the most able pupils, to build on what they already know and can do
- middle leaders continue to develop in their roles so they make an increasing contribution to the school's improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Jacobs  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I visited the school for one day. I held meetings with you, senior leaders and three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I talked to a representative of the local authority. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including: information about pupils' achievement; the school improvement plan; and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and your analysis of current pupils' achievement. We jointly visited all classes to see teaching and learning. I talked to a number of pupils in key stage 2, including when they were outside at breaktime. I also looked at a range of pupils' work with leaders, particularly in English, and during visits to lessons. I took account of the views of parents, speaking to many informally at the start of the school day, and considered the 43 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 29 free-text comments. I considered the 138 responses to the Ofsted pupil questionnaire and the 26 staff survey responses.