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Mrs Hafsha Hafeji  
Principal  
Bishop Bridgeman CofE Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Hafeji

### **Short inspection of Bishop Bridgeman CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 26 June 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2012.

#### **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.

Leaders have developed a positive, aspirational and inclusive culture based around the school motto of, 'we work, we play, we care, we pray'. Your strong leadership has established a caring and calm ethos that ensures that all pupils thrive. As a result of leaders' actions, attainment across the school has been rising steadily over the last few years. In 2018, the proportion of pupils by the end of Year 6 that achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly above the national average. Alongside this, over the last three years the progress that pupils have made in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 has also been significantly above the national average.

Since the school became an academy, leadership at the school has been further strengthened by the reallocation of management roles. You have established an enthusiastic and highly skilled staff that are determined to keep making improvements in their areas of responsibility. During the trust's growth, staff have had many opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills and pursue additional leadership responsibilities. This has contributed to staff remaining at the school as they are happy and feel valued and their morale is high. Consequently, teaching,

learning and assessment is consistently of a high standard across the school.

Governors are exceptionally proud of the school. They are determined that pupils will achieve to the best of their ability, and they have the highest aspirations for their futures. Governors regularly visit the school to review the school improvement priorities. As a result, they have a precise understanding of the school's effectiveness. They are knowledgeable and have a wide set of skills that they use to challenge and support you.

Pupils love being part of the school community, and they wear their school uniform with pride. They behave exceptionally well in class and around the school. They are extremely confident and curious learners, because of the interesting learning activities that teachers provide. They value their education because of the excellent relationships that they have with staff and each other. As a result of strong provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, pupils' understanding of British values is well developed. Pupils that I spoke with during the inspection were keen to tell me about the wide range of leadership roles that they have within the school and the work that they had done. For example, the 'ethos leaders' plan an annual conference for a wide range of delegates, where they present work that they have done, and the impact that it has had. They have also published their own ethos books. These books share a range of ideas and activities that other schools can use to promote their school values and pupils' spiritual development.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All arrangements are fit for purpose. This aspect of the school's work is effectively led. Records are detailed and of high quality. Staff are thorough in checking visitors' identify on entry. All staff and governors are well trained and kept up to date about safeguarding matters. Consequently, they have a good understanding of their responsibility to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. The school's records show that when there is a risk to pupils, leaders work closely with families to protect children. They also work effectively with other agencies when required.

Pupils that I spoke to said that they feel safe and that they know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when they are online. This is because the curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about staying safe. The majority of the parents that I spoke to said that their children are happy and safe. The use of 'prayer spaces' provides pupils with a safe space to go when they need time to reflect, which they value.

### **Inspection findings**

- As part of this inspection, I focused on several lines of enquiry. The first one concerned outcomes for children in the early years. This was because the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development has been consistently below the national average. I also wanted to focus on the progress that boys were making in their reading and writing.

- Children enter Nursery and Reception with knowledge, skills and understanding that are well below those typical for their age. Over the last three years you and your staff have identified that an increasing proportion enter with significant speech and language difficulties. Leaders identify barriers to learning and ensure that targeted support is implemented swiftly. They work effectively with external agencies when necessary to meet the needs of children. Consequently, all children get off to an excellent start in the early years.
- The learning environment inside and outside is vibrant, creative and well-resourced. Children chatter and play together happily. They display strong attitudes to learning. Children have access to a wide range of carefully planned activities which foster a love of learning and develop their basic English and mathematical skills. For example, a group of children were seen re-enacting the story of 'The Three Little Pigs' in the reading tepee outside. They were using well known phrases and taking on the different roles of the characters.
- Leaders have created more opportunities to improve children's, especially boys', progress in reading and writing. Enticing writing and reading 'nooks' have been developed to capture children's imaginations' and encourage them to engage eagerly in these activities. In one of the writing areas, boys demonstrated resilience and an ability to concentrate for periods of time. They thought carefully about the writing that they were producing and were keen to share this with adults.
- You have ensured that the teaching of phonics in the early years is strong. Children that read to me used their increasing phonic knowledge to support their reading. They displayed a genuine love for reading and told me that they enjoy reading to their teachers. You ensure that the teaching of reading is high priority in the early years. Carefully chosen books are on display to entice children to read and understand the importance of learning to read.
- Over the last three years the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has risen. You provided assessment information and this, alongside work seen in children's books, confirms that children are making excellent progress in the early years. In addition, boys' progress this year has been particularly strong in reading and writing because of the actions that leaders have taken.
- My next line of enquiry explored how leaders were supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Your inclusion leader is knowledgeable and has a good understanding of the needs of pupils who require additional or different support with their learning. There has been ample guidance for teachers and teaching assistants and they now have the skills to adapt pupils' learning in the classroom. You have detailed individual learning plans for all these pupils and parents are kept well informed of their children's progress. Leaders have high expectations for these pupils and additional support is matched accurately to their needs. Consequently, pupils with SEND make strong progress by the end of key stage 2, especially in mathematics.
- The final line of enquiry focused on whether the pupils were making strong progress in writing in key stage 2. This was because the proportion of pupils that

achieve at the higher standard has been below the national average for two years and writing is a school priority for improvement. Your leaders have skilfully mapped out whole-class texts which are used as stimulus for writing and to promote writing across the curriculum.

- You have provided teachers with a range of training to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to improve writing. Teachers now model vocabulary well and challenge pupils to use adventurous and ambitious language in their writing. They provide effective feedback to help pupils include more advanced features in their writing and achieve the higher standards. Pupils use this information well when they have opportunities to edit and redraft their learning. Teachers provide pupils with frequent and well-planned opportunities to develop their writing across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 5 had been learning about Ancient Greece and myths in English. They used their knowledge of Greek mythology to write their own myth, using specific vocabulary.
- Over the last three years the progress that pupils have made in writing by the end of key stage 2 has been in the top 20% of schools nationally. Despite this, further time is needed to embed these improvements so that more pupils achieve at the higher standard by the end of key stage 2.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- strengthen the strong progress pupils make in writing even further, so that outcomes at the higher standard by the end of key stage 2 are at least as good as those of reading and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer, the director of education for the Diocese of Manchester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bolton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Barlow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I observed teaching and learning and scrutinised examples of pupils' work. I met with you, senior and middle leaders and the office manager. I also spoke to your school improvement partner and the trust's chief executive officer. I spoke with pupils in key stage 2 and with pupils informally in lessons and around the school. I also spoke with four governors, including the chair of the

trustees. I took account of the eight free-text responses from parents and spoke to parents at the end of the school day. I reviewed a range of school documents. These included: the school's self-evaluation; the school's development plans and assessment records; minutes of the governing body meetings; safeguarding documentation; and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. I considered information posted on the school's website.