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Dear Mr Driver

Short inspection of Bridge Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 7 July 2016, 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 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. This is because you, and your team, think often about what has been successful, and take decisive actions to improve the school further. Your passion and commitment to the children and their families appears to be limitless and is shared by every member of staff. Pupils, parents and staff instantly recognise the school's cartoon character, Tio ('Thinking it Over') and understand that this represents the school's principle that learning never stops. This was reflected in the comments of a Year 6 pupil I spoke with who told me that, 'Teachers always say that they learn something new every day, and that's a good thing.' Regular workshops and family trips to local parks and markets help parents, some of whom are new to the country, to understand what their children are learning and how they can help their children at home. Parents trust and respect you and the school's staff because their children achieve well and the diversity of the local community is celebrated at every opportunity. One parent I spoke with on the playground summed this up by telling me that, 'The school is everything this community is about.'

The school building is constantly buzzing with activity because teachers and teaching assistants use every corridor and corner as teaching areas. Teachers support the learning needs of pupils of all abilities and backgrounds very well and this helps them to make good progress. For example, for pupils who are new to English or have limited writing skills, computer tablets and voice recorders help

them to communicate their ideas or share their mathematical skills and understanding. Teachers assess and track pupils' progress very closely, with regular reviews to make sure that no pupil falls behind in their learning. Leaders use this information to ensure that staff are well deployed and to inform their very effective management of the performance of staff. Pupils achieve well because teachers are very quick to address gaps in their learning and identify when pupils require work that is more challenging, particularly the most able. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to explain or write about what they have done, and why. As a result, their understanding is not as thorough, and their attainment not as good, as it could be across the full range of subjects.

Since the last inspection, you have given more responsibility to other school leaders and this has improved the impact of the leadership team on school improvement. Governors have supported you well in this by insisting that leaders present information about their areas of responsibility at meetings of the governing body. Minutes of these meetings show that governors ask challenging questions to ensure that leaders provide an accurate picture of the school and pupils' outcomes. This approach has played a significant part in helping you to address the areas for improvement from the last inspection. Teaching and learning are more consistent because the school's assessment system helps teachers to plan more effectively for each pupil's learning needs. Pupils' writing has seen a significant improvement, particularly this year, with pupils' books showing higher teacher expectations of pupils' handwriting, presentation, and spelling and grammar.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's three key words, 'calm, kind, caring' are ever-present in every part of the school. Adults provide excellent role models, with pupils and their families trusting school staff to be vigilant at all times. This approach ensures that every effort is made to protect pupils from harm. Where there is any evidence that a pupil may be at risk, you are determined in your efforts to secure their safety and well-being. The records you keep are detailed, thorough and securely stored. Staff and governors undertake regular child protection and safeguarding training to keep their knowledge up to date on issues such as cyber bullying, female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation and the prevention of extremism. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance closely and this has resulted in a fall in pupils' absence to levels that are now consistently in-line with, or below, the national average.

Pupils from Year 6 told me of how they feel safe at school and know that they can approach any adult if they need help. They told me that bullying and name-calling are rare, and the parents I spoke with told me the same. The school's records show that if bullying does occur, it is not tolerated and you deal with it firmly and swiftly. The pupils also told me of how they are taught to use the internet safely and of their pride at being trained to administer basic first aid. The school's curriculum is very effective at promoting pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education. The Year 6 pupils told me of the visits they have made to local places of worship and displayed great respect when they told me what this had taught them about different faiths. Their understanding of fundamental British values such as tolerance, compassion and service to others is evident. They enjoy opportunities to

experience democracy through elections to roles of responsibility and visits to the Houses of Parliament.

Inspection findings

- The school has continued to improve since the last inspection because leaders, governors and school staff are ambitious for every pupil. They know each pupil well and take time to understand their individual backgrounds and to know their families. Leaders' determination to involve pupils' families in their education is a major factor in each pupil's academic success.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The governing body benefits from a wealth of experience and expertise that ensures that school leaders are challenged effectively about their actions. Governing body minutes provide good evidence that governors play their part well in helping to make important decisions about improving the school.
- You have made sure that senior leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They have made a significant contribution to improving the school since the last inspection, particularly in raising pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because the assessment leader and special educational needs coordinator make sure that every pupil's progress is monitored regularly and any additional learning needs are met quickly.
- Your work to include pupils' families in the life of the school and their children's education continues to be a key strength of the school. You and your team are sensitive to the wide range of cultural and religious backgrounds. You use your extensive experience and understanding to create an inclusive school where there is equality of opportunity for all. As a result, the pupils feel safe and secure and they thrive, showing the utmost respect for each other, staff and other adults.
- Pupils enjoy their work and have very positive attitudes towards their learning. In a Year 6 French lesson which you and I observed, pupils energetically and excitedly used vocabulary and actions on how pupils travelled to school. Pupils I spoke with, from Year 6, described how they go on trips that help them to understand what they have learned 'even better'.
- The school's curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to link their learning in different subjects. Outdoor raised beds have potatoes that are harvested to give pupils the experience of growing and preparing their own food. From another bed, wheat will be used for pupils to make their own flour, as they would have in Stone-Age times. Pupils' understanding of local citizenship is evident in work they have done on environmental issues. Their awareness of global issues is very well illustrated through their knowledge and concerns for refugees in other countries.
- Pupils enter the school at levels of attainment that are below, and often well below, that typically seen for their age. In 2015, the proportion of

pupils reaching expected levels of attainment by the end of key stage 2 were above average in reading, mathematics, spelling and grammar. The proportion reaching the higher levels of attainment exceeded the national average in mathematics and spelling and grammar, but was below in reading.

- In 2015, pupils' outcomes in writing were below the national average at expected and higher levels of attainment by the end of key stage 2. Leaders acted quickly and effectively to address this underperformance. Evidence of work in pupils' books shows an improvement in the presentation and content of pupils' writing this year. As a result, unvalidated outcomes for 2016 show that pupils' attainment in writing is now in line with that seen nationally.
- In 2015, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was similar to that of other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics but below in writing. This was similar for the least able pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Higher attaining pupils exceeded the national average at the higher levels of attainment in writing and greatly exceed it in reading and mathematics.
- Over time, pupils make good progress from their starting points. In 2015, the proportion making the progress expected of pupils their age exceeded the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In reading and mathematics, the proportion making more than expected progress was well above the national average, while the proportion in writing was well below. Current assessment information shows that pupils continue to make good progress over time. Unvalidated data for Year 6 in 2016 suggests that school assessment information is broadly accurate and that pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is in line with national standards in reading and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' books shows that pupils make good progress over time and suggests that teachers' assessments in all year groups are broadly accurate. Pupils' work is marked in line with the school's policy and the feedback to pupils is effective in securing improvements in their work. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to establish their learning and deepen their understanding across all subjects by explaining the reasons for their answers. Consequently, they do not make as much progress or attain as well as they could.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils have more opportunities to explain what they have done and why, to ensure that they can apply their skills and knowledge, and deepen their understanding, in every subject.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen McMullan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the chair and five members of the governing body, and some pupils from Year 6. I considered the 31 responses on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. You, the school's assessment leader and I visited all classes. Along with the school's senior leaders, you and I looked at samples of pupils' work. I looked at a range of documents, including an evaluation of the school's performance, and plans for school improvement. In addition, I scrutinised information on how the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils currently, or previously, in receipt of free school meals) is spent. I also examined a number of policy documents, including those for child protection and special educational needs and the minutes from meetings of the governing body. I looked at the school's website, which meets requirements on the publication of specified information.