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Miss Julie Wilson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Wilson

### **Short inspection of Fladbury CofE First School**

Following my visit to the school on 31 January 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 May 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

The strengths that were noted at the last inspection have been sustained and built on. Since that time, the school's roll has increased year on year. It is now almost double what it was in 2014. This is testament to the school's growing reputation in the community and shows that parents and carers have increasing confidence in their village school. Almost all of the parents who completed the online questionnaire and who spoke to me at the start of the day are highly pleased with the school. They are happy with the progress their children are making, both academically and in their personal and social development. In particular, they appreciate the approachability of staff, the strong sense of community and the values the school stands for. One parent summed up these views, saying: 'My children are happy and well stimulated. The strong values we have as a family are encouraged in an appropriate way in school.'

There have been several changes to staffing over the past 18 months. However, you have worked hard to make sure that this has not had an adverse impact on the progress that pupils are making, or on their welfare. You have carried a substantial workload in recent months, but it is clear that you are still enthused by what you do and are working tirelessly to ensure the best outcomes for the pupils. You and the governing body have a secure understanding of what is working well and where efforts are needed. Your self-evaluation is accurate, and the areas for improvement

you are working on are appropriate. For example, your evaluation shows that pupils' achievement in mathematics does not always match that in reading and writing. This is rightly one of your current priorities. You are looking forward to the imminent arrival of a newly appointed assistant headteacher, who will share leadership responsibilities with you and add to the capacity for further improvement.

Fladbury is a happy and calm school. The pupils are well behaved, responsive, polite and keen to learn. They live up to the six values that underpin the school's work and the school's motto of 'Happy hearts, open minds, bright futures'. They are willing to try new things and want to do their best. They are also very eager to talk about what they are learning and share the work in their books. You and the staff team believe that outdoor learning should be an essential part of the pupils' experiences. Your 'Forest School' and eco-school areas are lovely resources that are clearly highly valued by the children. During this inspection, a group of children in Forest School stood transfixed as they watched a robin approach the bird food that they had put out.

Your school's website is currently missing several documents and pieces of information that are required by the Department for Education. The documents exist in paper form, but recent pressures on your time mean that they have not yet been uploaded.

At your last inspection, quite a few aspects of the school's work were said to need further improvement. You have largely been successful in dealing with them. Further details are in the inspection findings below.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at Fladbury. You and the governing body have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You and the staff are proactive, making sure through weekly discussions that potentially vulnerable pupils are quickly identified. You act promptly to support pupils and their families, including where 'early help' is needed. You make sure that any referrals are carefully documented, and that action taken subsequently is appropriate and timely. You provide a comprehensive training programme for staff and governors. You also check carefully to make doubly sure that staff fully understand their responsibilities to protect pupils and keep them safe.

The curriculum includes an appropriate emphasis on teaching pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet, and to understand risk. You adjust the curriculum in response to any issues that may arise. Staff and parents in their responses to the online questionnaires and during the inspection raised no concerns about pupils' safety or their behaviour.

### **Inspection findings**

- You have set about improving teaching and learning in mathematics with some determination. Following careful research, you and the staff have adopted a new scheme of work that teachers can adjust to suit the needs and aptitudes of their

pupils. Teachers have also attended training to make sure that they understand the methods they will teach and that the approaches used across the school are consistent. You are tracking the success of this work, for example, by observing lessons and looking at pupils' work in their books. You are about to review your current calculation policy to make sure that it fits in well with the new teaching scheme.

- We observed pupils responding confidently in their mathematics lessons. They were keen to get on with the tasks they had been set and concentrated well. Many were happy to share their thinking with the rest of the class. Work in their books shows that they are deepening their knowledge and understanding and are making progress in their learning. However, you do not yet have two sets of formal assessments to be clear about just how much progress is being made from pupils' starting points in September. Although pupils achieved well in mathematics overall, last year's assessments showed that pupils whose prior attainment was lower did not make as much progress in mathematics as they did in other subjects. The numbers of lower-attaining pupils are very small. Nevertheless, you intend to keep a close eye on these pupils' progress over the course of this year.
- Pupils achieve well in different subjects of the curriculum. They make strong progress in reading and writing, and the proportion of pupils working at or above the standard expected for their age increases as pupils move through the school. Pupils also make secure progress and deepen their knowledge and understanding in subjects such as history, geography, art and physical education. This is because subjects are combined in ways that capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Pupils also have the scope to pose their own questions and make decisions about that they want to find out. Staff have the flexibility to rearrange the timetable where necessary to make sure that topics are studied in depth. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about their previous work in history about the Romans and their current focus on the Stone, Iron and Bronze Ages.
- Wherever possible, learning is enhanced through visits to places of interest, by visitors to the school and by taking learning outdoors. During this inspection, older pupils were making clay pots modelled on Stone Age artefacts. They scoured the outdoor area to find suitable stones to use as implements to shape their pots. You make sure that staff are appropriately trained and experienced when they supervise pupils on more adventurous activities such as Forest School and bell-boating on the river.
- It is clear that you have achieved a great deal of success in dealing with the areas for further improvement identified at the last inspection. You were asked to make sure that pupils in the then Year 1 built well on their prior learning and that none fell behind. These pupils left Fladbury last year having achieved very well, especially in reading and writing. Around a third of them were assessed as working at greater depth (the higher standard) in all three of reading, writing and mathematics. A very small number, however, did not make as much progress in mathematics as they did in reading and writing.
- You were also asked to boost pupils' skills and confidence in speaking. You and the staff have done this very well indeed. During this inspection, pupils did not

lack confidence to speak in front of their whole class, to give explanations to one another and to discuss their work with me. There is still a small number of pupils who require specific support to develop their speech and language skills. They receive well-targeted interventions to help them.

- You were asked to ensure that the impact of the primary sports funding was evaluated, and the outcomes published. You have made sure that the evaluations have been carried out, but this year's is still not published on the website as it should be. Nevertheless, it is clear that the funding has been used effectively, as the pupils are energetic and keen on physical activity.
- You were also asked to make sure that pupils in this small, largely mono-cultural school were helped to learn about and from the different cultures and traditions in modern Britain. You set up very effective links with a primary school in Birmingham, making visits and exchanging ideas. This was highly praised in the report following the inspection of the school's religious character (SIAMS) in 2016. Because of the pressures on staffing, this aspect of the school's work has received less emphasis in recent months. However, the need remains to make sure that pupils are as well prepared as they can be for their next steps as citizens of Britain today.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- work to improve teaching and learning in mathematics continues, to make sure that pupils of all abilities make strong progress in the subject
- all of the required information is published on the school's website
- staff explore ways of further developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of life in modern Britain.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda McGill  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

At the start of the inspection, I walked around the school with you. I met members of staff to talk briefly about the inspection. We spoke about the lines of enquiry for the inspection and agreed a plan for the day. I observed pupils and parents arriving in the morning and spoke to some parents.

I visited classrooms with you to look at teaching and learning in mathematics. I also observed the pupils taking part in Forest School activities and over lunchtime. I spoke to a group of older pupils about their current work and looked at their books. I spoke with you about the school's approach to safeguarding and the curriculum and assessment. I had discussions with the chair and two other members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and your English subject leader. I met the school's office manager and looked at the record of recruitment and vetting checks.

I looked at several documents, including information on the school's website. I also took account of the 36 responses made by parents on the Parent View website, including free text comments. I considered the views of four members of staff who completed online questionnaires.