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Ms Rosemary Horton
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Horton

Short inspection of Broadmeadow Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 13 July 2017, 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Pupils are enthusiastic and well-behaved learners. The staff value pupils' work and efforts and they motivate pupils to succeed and enjoy their education. This is reflected in much improved attendance rates that are now in line with national figures. Leaders and staff plan and deliver a curriculum which makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Pupils are excited by the many and varied experiences planned for them that include role play linked to traditional stories, puppet making, African drumming and a good range of creative and performing arts. A significant improvement since the previous inspection has been the way pupils work independently without direct supervision. This is helping them to take on more responsibility for their own learning. Pupils mature into confident and articulate learners ready for the next stage of their education when they transfer into junior school. Pupils respect each other and relationships across the school are positive and harmonious.

The early years provides a good education for children in both the Nursery and Reception Years. A range of interesting and varied indoor and outdoor activities are provided that stimulate and interest the children. The teaching of phonics and early language and literacy in the early years is raising standards. From very low starting points on entry to the school, the children make good progress. Children who join

with little or no spoken English and are learning English as an additional language make rapid progress.

The 2017 unvalidated national assessments for Year 2 pupils in reading reflect the good foundations laid in the early years as the proportion of pupils reaching age-related standards is in line with the 2016 national average. The focus now should be on sustaining this by building on the good achievement seen in the early years to focus now on improving pupils' writing and mathematics skills further.

Last year's national assessments show that standards in writing and mathematics were below the national averages by the end of Year 2. Currently, pupils in Years 1 and Year 2 are doing better than last year and the support provided for pupils who have additional learning needs is effective in helping them reach their individualised learning targets.

You and the governors provide effective leadership which is continuing to improve the quality of teaching. As you know, one area for improvement reported at the time of the school's previous inspection was to develop the role of staff with management responsibilities. You have been successful in making sure that the early years and key stage 1 phases of the school are managed well. In addition, staff with management responsibilities monitor and evaluate the actions set out in the school's improvement plan. This level of monitoring is raising standards, particularly in reading and in the early years. However, there is still room for improvement by making sure that the core priorities set out in action plans focus on sustaining current improvements to pupils' achievement in phonics, writing and mathematics. We discussed a number of other limitations to improvement planning.

Teaching has improved well since the previous inspection. Teachers usually pose challenging questions during lessons and pupils' work shows that many have opportunities to independently check and improve their work. The form and structure of pupils' writing is improving well, although some of the workbooks we looked at show that pupils do not always have enough opportunities to correct spelling and punctuation errors. In some mathematics lessons, you and I discussed some of the strengths and relative weaknesses of teaching and learning. I pointed out that although teachers provide more challenge than at the time of the previous inspection, they do not always probe deeply when asking questions. I could see, for example, pupils coping well with some challenging number problems. However, teachers and support staff do not ask questions aimed at identifying gaps or misunderstandings in pupils' learning. As a result, pupils are not always getting the right support if they are stuck, so they try to guess rather than think logically.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are robust and fit for purpose. Leaders and governors review staff vetting procedures and policies systematically and there is a vigilant culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Teaching, support and administrative staff are well trained, including in aspects such as the national Prevent 'duty', a programme designed to protect pupils and families from extremism or radicalisation.

Leaders carry out regular reviews of safeguarding and child protection policies, and risk assessments of school activities and educational visits. The safety, security and well-being of children in the early years are managed well. All the parents that I spoke with agree that pupils are safe in school. Parents believe, and rightly, that their children are very well cared for by the staff.

Inspection findings

- All the parents I spoke with agree that staff and pupils reflect the school's core values, 'Great teaching, great learning, great fun'. Parents told me that these values and the effective education provided for their children enable them to mature into responsible young people. Parents are right.
- Last year's national assessments and current work and progress information show that pupils reach standards in reading that compare favourably with national figures. This is because standards are improving in the early years and in phonics by the end of Year 1. The support provided for the large proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective, particularly in helping many of them reach age-related standards in reading.
- The core priority now is to continue focusing on writing and mathematics. Pupils are increasingly writing more independently but make too many spelling and punctuation errors. Staff are not intervening enough while pupils write to make sure that pupils learn from their mistakes and avoid repeating the same errors.
- Although standards were below average at key stage 1 last year, pupils made good progress in relation to their low starting points. This year's assessments show marked improvement compared to last year, particularly in reading. This now needs to be sustained by ensuring that those pupils who reached the required standard in phonics also reach age-related standards in writing by the end of Year 2.
- The current focus on improving children's speech and language skills, including specialist support provided weekly by a qualified therapist, is bearing fruit. It is having a positive impact on improving children's spoken language and early literacy skills. Children are increasingly conversing and sharing ideas while they work with their classmates. Ultimately, more children are reaching a good level of development.
- This year's assessments show improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching or exceeding age-related standards in mathematics. We observed some lessons and groups of pupils during the inspection and found that pupils receive individualised and well-focused teaching. However, teachers do not extend the questions they pose to identify any misunderstandings so these can be addressed during lessons. The focus now should be on identifying gaps in pupils' mathematical understanding and assessing these during lessons through sharper and more open-ended questioning.
- I scrutinised the school improvement plan and, as you know, I pointed out some strengths and relative weaknesses in the plan. You, the leadership team and governors have included the right priorities for improvement. Since the previous inspection, you have improved the way senior and middle leaders monitor

teaching and pupils' work in books. However, I pointed out that there were too many priorities and actions in the improvement plan. This makes it difficult for leaders and governors to focus on the most urgent actions needed to continue raising standards. Secondly, the plan lacks enough measures of success to help leaders, governors and staff gauge the impact actions on your stated priorities. In addition, there are too many priorities for staff to focus on, so the school's efforts, as reflected in the improvement plan, lack focus.

- Attendance rates have improved compared with last year's overall rates, including a significant reduction in persistent absence. Pupils enjoy the varied and stimulating activities and lessons provided by staff and the group I spoke to said they enjoyed coming to school. Pupils told me that the staff make them feel safe and that they really care for them.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Improvements to pupils' achievements in phonics, writing and mathematics are sustained by:
 - building on the good start made in the early years so that the proportions of pupils reaching the required standards in phonics at the end of Year 1 and Year 2 match or exceed national figures
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write independently and accurately, and time for them to correct spelling and punctuation errors
 - intervening more during lessons while pupils work to help them understand why they make mistakes in writing
 - making sure that in mathematics lessons adults question and assess pupils' knowledge to identify and address any misunderstandings when pupils are engaged in problem-solving tasks.
- The improvement plan has sharper priorities for improvement specifically aimed at raising standards. In addition, the plan should include measures of success so that leaders and governors can gauge the impact of actions taken towards meeting the school's stated aims and priorities.

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

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the teacher responsible for managing the early years. I also met with the chair of the governing body and two governors. You and I visited parts of lessons in all classes, including the early years. I scrutinised samples of pupils' work in books during visits to lessons. I spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day to seek their views about the school. I could not carry out an analysis of other parents' views as there were too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I spoke to teaching, clerical and support staff. I spoke to many pupils during lessons and met with a group to hear them read and discuss their work and views about the school. I analysed the results from the most recent national tests and teachers' assessments. I scrutinised and discussed with you the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. I checked staff vetting and safeguarding procedures to determine whether the school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective.