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21 May 2015

Ms L Cartwright
Brook Primary School
George Street
Wordsley
Stourbridge
DY8 5YN

Dear Ms Cartwright

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Brook Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 20 May 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss behaviour in your school.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about behaviour at the school. These concerns were related to historic above average rates of exclusions.

Evidence

Inspectors considered evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussions with pupils
- documentary evidence
- discussions with school leaders and staff.

Having evaluated all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the school's previous inspection.

Context

There are currently 380 pupils on the school roll. These pupils are taught in 14 classes. The proportion of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs is slightly higher than the average nationally. The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with behavioural, social and emotional needs. The five pupils who attend this specialist provision come from across Dudley. About a quarter of

pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. This is similar to the average for all primary schools nationally. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups or known to speak English as an additional language are much lower than average.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

In lessons, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and follow instructions promptly. They are keen to answer questions and listen to the answers and ideas of other pupils with respect. The great majority of pupils apply themselves well to their work and say that they enjoy learning. Pupils move around the school building calmly and sensibly and display good manners, such as saying please and thank you or holding doors open for adults or for one another.

At break times and lunchtime, pupils play co-operatively with one another. Levels of supervision are good; staff move around the playground and look out for any pupils who are lonely or upset so that they can help them to find someone to play with. Staff are vigilant and check that pupils are using the good range of play equipment safely and fairly. When pupils are eating their lunch, staff encourage them to use cutlery correctly and act as good role models so that pupils use good manners and talk sociably together.

Pupils say that behaviour is usually very good. They understand the 'Buddy Board' system that is used in every class and are keen to ensure that their names stay on the happy side of the board. Pupils understand the rewards that are available including certificates, house points and reward time and are also clear about sanctions such as 'time out' or a letter to parents. Pupils' comments indicate that staff use behaviour management systems consistently. One younger pupil explained that 'they all use the same rules, so it is fair for everybody'.

A small group of pupils attend specialist provision within the school which is known as 'Badgers'. These pupils and some others from the school have additional support at the start and end of the school day. Adults help them to recognise and manage their feelings, plan for a successful day and work through any worries. One pupil explained that this helps them to have a good start to the day and reminds them to make good choices. Pupils from the Badgers group attend lessons and learn successfully with other pupils most of the time. They were keen to show their reward charts and explained that lots of ticks mean more reward time at the end of the day. One parent had noted on a recent parent survey that staff 'have believed in him (her son) and given him belief in himself'.

Almost all parents who completed the online survey Parent View or the school's own parents' survey or who spoke to the inspector during the inspection were confident that their children are safe and well looked-after at school. The large majority of parents say that staff are approachable and that any concerns are quickly and effectively sorted out.

School leaders ensure that detailed and thorough records are kept of any behaviour or bullying incidents and of any exclusions or times when pupils have to be physically stopped from hurting themselves or others. Leaders then review these records regularly to identify any patterns or trends and make appropriate changes

and improvements. Records show that the number of incidents of poor behaviour is relatively low and is reducing further.

In 2012/13 the proportion of pupils who received one or more fixed-term exclusions was high in comparison to other primary schools. The number of fixed-term exclusions decreased in the school year 2013/14 but was still above the average nationally. The number of days lost to exclusion rose between September and December 2014. During this time only a small number of pupils were excluded but a few were excluded more than once. Some of these pupils are now attending specialist provision elsewhere. School leaders recognise the need to reduce the number of exclusions and are providing additional support for the small number of pupils with the most challenging behaviour. For example, adults work with pupils to help them understand the consequences of their actions and consider alternative behaviours and responses. This is beginning to have a positive impact and since January, the number of exclusions has reduced.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They were able to suggest various ways that they can keep themselves safe, for example by not sharing personal details when using the internet or by telling an adult about any inappropriate content. Pupils say that bullying is very unusual and that name-calling, including racist or homophobic language is rare. One pupil explained that 'it is just not allowed at Brook'.

Good attendance is promoted and celebrated. As a result, overall attendance is above the national average for primary schools and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is low. Absences are followed up promptly. School leaders carefully check information about attendance and poor attendance is followed up by letters, meetings or home visits. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not as good as that of other pupils.

Priorities for further improvement

- Work with parents to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils so that it matches the good attendance of other pupils.
- Further reduce the number of occasions when pupils are excluded by continuing to develop strategies to support the small number of pupils with the most challenging behaviour.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Dudley, to the Secretary of State for Education and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Morag Kophamel
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc Chair of the Governing Body