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19 December 2016

Mrs Lehla Abbott
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Abbott

Short inspection of Broomgrove Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 7 December 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 September 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection and together you have addressed all the key issues. You and the staff have created an exceptionally caring and supportive school where all pupils are welcome, no matter what their background or special educational needs. Many of the 45 parents who sent me text messages have similar views to the parent who wrote, 'We feel very grateful that our children are at such a caring, well-run school. The school responds to each one as an individual which means they are all having positive learning experiences.'

Pupils enjoy school. As one pupil said, 'I like it because I learn a lot and I get nice teachers. I really want to push myself so I learn well.'

There have been a number of changes to the staff since the last inspection including yourself and the deputy headteacher. You have successfully built a very strong team and teachers appreciate the good training and support you provide for them.

For the past two years girls have not done as well as boys in reading, writing or mathematics by the time they leave the school. It is clear from the school's current performance information and work in pupils' books that you and the new English leader have turned this around and girls are now achieving as well as boys. All the

girls I spoke to during the inspection were very keen to tell me how much they enjoy learning and why.

You are successfully ensuring that disadvantaged pupils of all abilities are catching up with all other pupils nationally. You have improved your evaluation of which catch-up programmes work best and it is clear from your current performance information that pupils eligible for support funded by the pupil premium grant are making good progress.

Most-able pupils, including the disadvantaged most-able, are making good progress with reading. They read fluently and with good understanding by the time they leave the school. This is not always the case for lower- and middle-ability pupils. This is because they do not consistently apply the skills they learn in phonics lessons when they are reading from their reading book. You have recognised that the way reading books are organised does not help pupils chose a book at precisely the right level. You and the English leader have started to review all the books to make sure each set follows the order in which pupils are taught letter sounds so they can practise their reading skills more successfully.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, the staff and governors have excellent systems for ensuring that all pupils are safe. Staff have effective and up-to-date training and as a result are quick to inform you of any concerns they have. You work successfully with outside agencies and keep careful records of all meetings and contacts you have, thus ensuring that appropriate and rapid action is taken when needed. All required processes and procedures are in place and regularly checked by the local authority.

Pupils say they have lots of friends and that there is no bullying of any kind. There is very occasional unkindness but pupils are confident to talk to an adult about this and say it is dealt with very rapidly. Pupils like playtimes but are aware that play space is limited. Pupils say that they have to be careful not to bump into each other when dashing around. They also say there is not enough space to play a good game of football as other children keep running on to the pitch. You and the school council are rightly considering how to extend the play space by using the school field all year round.

Inspection findings

- You and the governors have a crystal-clear vision for the school. As one governor explained, 'This school is seated in the community and with parents. We are very welcoming. We want our children to be the best citizens they can be.' Parents put great value on this vision and it is their main reason for choosing the school for their children. One parent wrote, 'A fantastic school. Very warm and collegiate feel, community minded and welcoming to parents. Children are listened to and valued. Staff are very focused on children as individuals and also create a lovely feeling of "all together".'
- You and the staff are working hard to improve attendance. You are tenacious in

checking why pupils are not in school and in encouraging parents to make sure children get to school on time. There is a good range of rewards for pupils who attend every session. As a result of these approaches current attendance is improving.

- You are doing everything possible to reduce persistent absence. You know which families find it difficult to attend regularly and why this is the case. You have a sensitive yet assertive approach to making sure that their children are in school as much as possible.
- Your approach to recording incidents of poor behaviour is exemplary. For every pupil identified as at risk of exclusion, you have made a careful risk assessment. This ensures that staff know how to manage pupils who have social and emotional needs. You keep very detailed records of behaviour incidents. This enables you and the staff to check that you are taking the best action to avoid, as well as deal with, challenging behaviour.
- There have been no permanent exclusions since the last inspection. You use fixed-term exclusions as a last resort. During the short time the pupil is not in school, you and the staff evaluate the actions you are taking and make changes where you think this will help the pupil to behave appropriately. This helps pupils get back into class routines rapidly and is successfully reducing challenging behaviour in some cases.
- All staff have good training in managing challenging behaviour and support each other well.
- Although pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is improving, the way pupils form letters and numbers does not always reflect the school's approach to this. This is because there is not a consistent approach to teaching presentation in Reception and Year 1. The early years foundation stage leader is working with your feeder nursery schools and with parents to make sure that children learn how to write letters and numbers carefully as soon as they are ready to do so. However, this is not yet having sufficient impact on improving presentation, particularly for lower-ability pupils.
- You and the new English leader have successfully improved your approach to teaching phonics, and current performance information shows that pupils are on track to do better next year in the phonics check. You acknowledge that this is still below national expectations and additional diagnosis and intervention have been put in place to further improve phonics. For example, the English leader is starting to read with groups of pupils across the school to check how well they know their letter sounds and use this knowledge when reading words.
- You and the governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well because you evaluate your actions carefully and make sure that new initiatives are helping to raise pupil achievement. However, you do not explain this clearly enough in key documents like your self-evaluation summary or the school improvement plan. Targets in the improvement plan are not sharp enough, so you cannot check how successful you are. Also, the next steps you identify in your self-evaluation do not always appear in the development plan.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvement planning is based on sharply focused self-evaluation which identifies key priorities to raise pupils' achievement
- middle leaders use effective and appropriate evaluation methods to check how well pupils are learning
- pupils learn how to form letters and numbers accurately and carefully, as soon as possible and that the school approach is taught well in every class.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The focus of this inspection was to check how the school is:

- reducing the number of fixed-term exclusions, particularly for boys, and ensuring that all pupils are safe
- doing everything possible to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence
- improving girls' reading, writing and mathematics from when they start at the school
- checking that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils
- making sure that the approach to teaching phonics is helping pupils, especially girls, reach the expected standard in the phonics check in Year 1.

During the inspection I spoke to you, the governors, a representative from the local authority, leaders for mathematics, English and early years foundation stage, the staff, pupils and parents. We observed phonics teaching in all key stage 1 classes. We looked at girls' written work in writing and mathematics. I read with less-able and middle-ability girls in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. I analysed Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents, and the text messages that came from parents.