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Maxine Low
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Dear Ms Low

Short inspection of Brooklands Farm Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 2017 with Her Majesty's Inspector Caroline Dulon, 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 July 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

You have communicated a clear vision for Brooklands Farm. Your inspirational leadership has provided much needed stability during an extended period of ongoing expansion across both school sites. You motivate your wider team well and ensure that everyone works collaboratively. You have developed a culture at Brooklands Farm where all see themselves as learners. You aspire to grow potential in everyone and keep a keen eye on developing the school's leaders of tomorrow. Your tenacity in driving those new to teaching to develop rapidly also ensures that everyone is well placed to help pupils to succeed.

You are rigorous in researching new and effective ways to help pupils learn. You know your school well and are not afraid to try out different ideas to improve teaching and learning. You are meticulous in checking the effectiveness of any new plans and will adapt them accordingly if they are not working well. Your attention to detail ensures that teaching continues to improve.

Parents hold the school in high regard. They say that staff look after their children well and always encourage them to do their best. They value the effective communication there is between school and home, and appreciate how the school's staff keep them informed about the progress their children make. One parent said,

'the staff are caring, children are happy, and my child is always excited to go to school.'

Pupils are confident and enjoy learning. They like the various rewards and badges they earn throughout the school that help them behave well and learn effectively. They respect each other and value the strong friendships they have at school. They say that on the rare occasions that bullying happens, teachers deal with it very effectively.

Pupils' achievement is good. For the past three years, the proportion of children leaving the early years well prepared for Year 1 has been above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics at the end of both Year 1 and Year 2 also exceeds the expected standard. At the end of key stage 1, most pupils meet the expected standards for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. After a slight dip in 2016, you have rightly identified the need to increase pupils' attainment in key stage 2 so that it is once again above the national average.

When the school was last inspected, inspectors noted that pupils made good progress from their various starting points, had mature attitudes, and that teaching was good and sometimes better. You have built upon these strengths and addressed the areas identified for improvement with good effect. You have adapted teaching well to ensure that pupils contribute effectively in lessons and are confident to ask questions. You have ensured that the mathematics leader has developed successful opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematics skills. That said, you are rightly focusing on developing teachers' ability to better anticipate pupils' misconceptions in this subject.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that arrangements to keep pupils safe are fit for purpose. All records are detailed, accurate and of a high quality. Leaders make sure that, when recruiting staff and volunteers, all appropriate checks are completed.

Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding undertake regular, appropriate training. They ensure that all staff know what to do should they have any concerns about pupils' safety or well-being. When new staff start at Brooklands Farm, relevant safeguarding is part of their induction training. Systems to keep children safe are robust.

You have ensured that pupils learn well how to keep themselves safe. For example, in e-safety discussions, pupils know that when using the internet they must keep personal information private. Pupils told inspectors that if they had a concern, they would talk to a trusted adult. Consequently, pupils develop good habits to protect themselves from risk.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, inspectors focused on how disadvantaged pupils are supported to make good progress. They also looked closely at how leaders ensure that pupils, including the most able, are sufficiently challenged. Finally, inspectors checked how middle-ability girls are supported to achieve well in mathematics.
- You have recently reviewed how best to support disadvantaged pupils and have developed teaching accordingly. Strong leadership ensures that everyone has high expectations to see these pupils achieve well. Your determination to sharpen provision for disadvantaged pupils is ensuring that a greater proportion of these pupils are now making accelerated progress.
- Teachers take appropriate action to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive learning opportunities tailored to their needs. For example, some of the most able disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 are supported with personalised challenges to improve their mathematics and writing skills. Other disadvantaged pupils in Year 1 who need to catch up in reading are supported with successful additional teaching sessions. You have rightly identified that not all disadvantaged pupils achieve quite as well as other pupils, but these differences are reducing as a result of the effective measures you have introduced.
- During my visit, I saw a number of successful strategies you have put into place to ensure that pupils, including the most able, are challenged appropriately. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the most able pupils were encouraged to solve more difficult questions. They enjoyed the extra challenge and, as a result, deepened their understanding of subtraction.
- Middle leaders keep a close eye on the progress that the most able pupils make. However, the information leaders gather is not currently collated to support reviews of the progress this group of pupils makes across the school. You know that you need to continue to develop clear expectations and maintain closer oversight to ensure that these pupils achieve their full potential.
- The mathematics leader has developed a clear strategy to improve pupils' outcomes and is leading improvements to teaching well. However, occasionally, teachers do not pick up pupils' misconceptions in mathematics quickly enough.
- You have rightly identified that some middle-ability girls do not always achieve well in mathematics. Pupils that need to catch up are now supported well with a more tailored approach to their learning. They are making better progress than in the past because provision is matched well to their individual needs.
- Leaders have developed a suitable assessment system to track pupils' progress across the curriculum. However, they rightly recognise that assessment information does not always help teachers to identify well enough the precise strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning. When this happens, teachers are not able to set accurate next steps for pupils' learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers set ambitious expectations for the most able pupils and track their progress carefully so that a greater proportion exceed expectations for their age
- teachers routinely anticipate and identify the mistakes that pupils make in mathematics, and address them promptly
- the school's assessment system is developed further to enable teachers to identify pupils' next steps for learning more precisely.

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

Yours sincerely

Dom Cook
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors observed learning across classes in key stage 1 and key stage 2, spoke to pupils and looked at work in their exercise books. Some observations were conducted jointly with the executive headteacher and with other senior leaders. Meetings were held with senior leaders and with a representative from the local authority. I spoke with the chair of the governing body on the telephone. I took into account 265 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including a number of written responses. I also analysed 35 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 21 responses to the pupil survey. A range of documents was reviewed, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation, information about pupils' achievement, governing body reports, local authority reports, and records concerning safeguarding and pupils' attendance.