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Mrs Wendy Skinner  
Headteacher  
Brunswick House Primary School  
Leafy Lane  
Maidstone  
Kent  
ME16 0QQ

Dear Mrs Skinner

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Brunswick House Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 13 June 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- refine the assessment system to track pupils' progress from their starting points, including in subjects other than English and mathematics
- strengthen leaders' evaluations of the use of the additional pupil premium funding, and provide clear plans for its future use that are linked to measureable targets to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
- continue to develop the recording of governors' work to hold school leaders to account; for example, demonstrate the impact of governors' monitoring visits on improving outcomes for pupils.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and the school's leadership team. I also met with a group of governors, including the co-chairs of the governing body, and the school's improvement adviser from the local authority, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I visited all lessons with school leaders. I spoke with pupils, including during lessons and lunchtime. I reviewed pupils' work with the school's middle leaders. I also checked safeguarding procedures, and evaluated a wide range of the school's documentation, including the school improvement plans.

## **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection, there have been changes to the leadership and governance of the school. There are now two deputy headteachers, neither of whom were in post at the time of the previous inspection, and two new middle leaders. There are new co-chairs of the governing body. Three class teachers have changed since the previous inspection.

## **Main findings**

Since the inspection, you have rightly concentrated on improving the quality of safeguarding. You commissioned an external review and have implemented all recommendations. Your safeguarding procedures are clear and effective. Staff are now highly trained and have a clear understanding of what to look for and what to do if they are ever worried about a child. You ensure that information is carefully recorded and checked, tracking this rigorously to ensure that all information is 'joined up'. You work well with external agencies and know when to ask for further advice. Pupils tell me that they feel safe and that there is always an adult to speak to. They also like the 'worry box' and 'buddy' system and are proud of their 'buddy bench'.

Leaders have maintained their focus on making sure that all pupils experience a high quality of teaching. Whole-school approaches such as the development of mathematical reasoning have been effective. During my visits to classrooms, the atmosphere was purposeful. I observed pupils being challenged by interesting tasks that were matched to their prior learning. The steps taken to improve teaching through staff training, including for teaching assistants, have been successful. The work of your middle leaders has had a positive impact. Pupils explained what they were learning with enthusiasm. They clearly enjoyed grappling with some challenging tasks. Pupils told me they liked their lessons and their teachers, and learning was 'fun'.

Different tasks and support for pupils were evident in lessons and in pupils' books.

Teachers plan these tasks carefully so that pupils work at the right level for their learning. The tasks provide suitable challenge, especially for the most able. Teaching assistants' skills are increasing and many provide high-quality support for pupils. Pupils' books showed that many pupils are making rapid progress with their English and mathematics, and the support that they are given helps them with this. Teachers provide useful verbal feedback to pupils. Leaders are looking for ways to capture this in a way that, rightly, does not add to teachers' workload. The clear guidance teachers give to pupils helps them to make progress with their learning.

You have made stronger links between self-evaluation and improvement planning in order to have greater impact on outcomes for pupils. You understand the need to more closely link targets to the progress of groups of pupils, especially those who are vulnerable. You commissioned an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium and adopted the recommendations. You now have different leaders taking responsibility for this important aspect of the school's work. The formal evaluation of the additional money for disadvantaged pupils has, historically, not been sharp enough, although you are able to provide some compelling case studies to show the difference this work has made. Your work to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils across the school has been highly effective. The progress of disadvantaged pupils in Reception Year is rapid. The specific speech and language support is effective in helping these pupils to gain the skills that they need in order to access the curriculum successfully. However, their attainment is still below that of other pupils and leaders understand that they will continue to need support to catch up as they move into key stage 1.

Leaders track the attainment of pupils very closely and have made good use of a range of support to make sure that this information is accurate. The school's information shows that pupils are reaching higher standards than before, for all groups of pupils, in most subject areas, for each year group. Individual pupils' progress is monitored closely through pupil progress meetings. These meetings have been effective in addressing identified barriers to learning, especially those relating to pupils' attendance. However, the school's tracking of pupils' progress from their starting points has gone through many formats since the previous inspection. This makes it difficult to identify if pupils are making the progress that they should. Leaders are currently working to simplify this tracking and ensure that it allows them to monitor groups from their starting points. Leaders know that this work needs to be continued and shared with governors to enable them to hold leaders to account for this aspect of their role.

The governing body has improved its skills with good use of the local authority's training and are starting to evaluate their own work more closely. For example, they have changed their recording of their meetings to ensure that their challenging questions are evidenced. They understand that there is still room for improvement; for example, their useful monitoring visits tend to record what is happening in the school – the actions – rather than demonstrating governors' strategic challenge with the focus on the impact that such work has on pupils. Governors make sure that

they know the school well through scheduling presentations by middle leaders. They understand the need to drill down more closely into the information presented in order to ensure that they know how effective actions have been in raising pupils' progress and attainment.

### **External support**

School leaders are benefiting from effective support by local authority advisers from Kent. The school improvement adviser offers appropriate challenge and support. Leaders also make good use of informal support from leaders at local schools, including the local Maths Hub. Governors have accessed a wide range of useful training from the local authority and, rightly, plan to continue to do so.

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

Yours sincerely

Lucy English  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**