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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Emma Haywood
Headteacher
Brinsley Primary and Nursery School
Moor Road
Brinsley
Nottingham
Nottinghamshire
NG16 5AZ

Dear Mrs Haywood

Short inspection of Brinsley Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 4 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. In regard to the key recommendation from the last inspection to improve the quality of teaching, in view of the high rate of staff turnover over recent years, the quality of teaching has not moved closer to outstanding. It remains securely good. You have, however, successfully addressed the specific recommendations. Namely, pupils have frequent opportunities to develop their independent learning skills and teachers make good use of open-ended questions to help pupils improve their work.

Since the last inspection, and prior to your appointment in September 2015, the school had undergone a period of decline. In particular, standards in reading and writing had dropped, especially in key stage 1. Following your appointment, you have taken rapid and decisive action to address and eliminate weaknesses and, as a result, standards in English are now improving quickly, especially in key stage 1. Evidence from a wide range of inspection activities shows that your strong focus on reading and writing, especially for the most able pupils, is having a positive impact on progress throughout the school. The quality of pupils' writing is impressive, both in terms of the high standards they are currently achieving and the obvious pride they take in their work.

As an experienced leader, working closely with your effective assistant headteacher, you have an aspirational and incisive vision for the school. Together, alongside

governors, you display strong and determined leadership and there is a good capacity to drive improvement.

You are strongly focused on improving the quality of teaching and astute appointments have been made with this in mind. You have implemented a deliberate policy of recruiting a blend of newly-qualified and experienced staff, with a view to creating a more settled, stable staff team. From September 2017, all staff will be employed in permanent posts, resolving the current issues caused by staff turnover and strengthening the team.

Pupils say they are proud of their school and all parents with whom I spoke were very satisfied with the quality of education, care and support their children receive.

Classrooms are well-organised and attractive and an atmosphere of calm and orderly behaviour pervades the school, both in lessons and at other times such as playtimes and lunchtimes. The development of the outdoor spaces is a real strength of the school's provision. They are exceptionally well-resourced and pupils have ample opportunity to explore a wide range of physical and other play and learning activities through use of the hard and soft playgrounds, playing field, trim trail, allotment garden, basketball, football and netball pitches and courts, picnic benches, 'reading den' and outdoor storytelling area.

Leaders and governors are fully aware that the school's absence figures have been above national averages for the past three years. You were able to show me strong evidence that you have very robust systems in place to record and track pupil absences. You analyse attendance figures closely and regularly. You take appropriate action to follow up any issues. Good attendance is celebrated with pupils and there is a thorough policy in place. However, the version of the attendance policy published on the school website is not in line with the fully updated version currently used in school. This should be rectified as soon as possible, so that parents have the latest information to hand.

In spite of the wide-ranging actions being taken by the school, and the positive impact on attendance for individual cases, there appears to be little significant improvement in overall attendance rates. The work in this regard must continue.

Following a period of considerable staff turnover, the more stable staffing planned for next year should help recent improvements in pupils' progress to be sustained.

You are aware of a few items of information that are currently missing from the school's website: details of governors' business and financial interests and their committee structure; and an updated attendance policy.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Your records pertaining to child protection, behaviour or the rare instances of bullying are rigorous and thorough.

The school site is secure and pupils told me they feel safe from harm. They readily confirmed that they are taught about issues such as bullying, internet safety and 'stranger danger' in lessons and assemblies. Pupils described the school as 'friendly' and they appreciate the reward system in place to encourage good behaviour. Pupils stated that they have confidence in the staff to 'sort things out' quickly when disagreements or misbehaviour occur.

All lessons and activities observed were orderly and calm. Pupils move around the school at all times in a natural, well-controlled manner. A wide range of evidence was seen of pupils being encouraged to respect and care for one another; their politeness to adults and to each other is impressive.

Inspection findings

- Following your close analysis of pupil outcomes, you have rightly focused on improving pupils' reading and writing. Samples of work from the most able writers show an impressive use of ambitious and imaginative descriptions such as 'a bright and iridescent painting' or 'elegant wrought iron gates'. Older pupils were observed using complex sentences and punctuation accurately in their work, inspired by their science or topic work, as well as by a literacy theme. Books are well presented and show evidence of clear progress from the start of the year; this applies equally to all ages and groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.
- The quality of pupils' written work in key stage 1 is particularly impressive. It is clear, from looking at a wide sample of their work in a range of subjects, that the improvement measures you have put in place over the past two years are now having a strong impact. Your current assessment figures show that an increased number of pupils in key stage 1 are now working at greater depth in writing. The inspection findings agree with your assessments.
- As a result of the whole-school focus on 'purple editing', pupils have a clear understanding of how to improve their written work. As one pupil put it, 'You can feel nervous when you don't know the answer to something, but when you learn from your mistakes it boosts your confidence.' Evidence from pupils' work and from the school's current assessment data shows that your action to improve pupils' writing has been successful.
- In order to improve standards of reading, you have revised the arrangements for the teaching of phonics so that a coordinated approach is now in place across the early years, Year 1 and Year 2. I observed teachers leading these sessions with energy and enthusiasm. Even very young children were seen rising to the challenge of their teachers' high expectations. The positive impact of this work can be seen in the recently improved outcomes in phonics and reading at the end of key stage 1.
- Governors have audited their work since the last inspection, assisted by the local authority. The current board has a sound strategic overview of the work of the school, providing well-documented challenge to senior leaders with regard to the school's performance. Governors have also established a regular programme of

visits to school, joining senior leaders for activities such as book scrutinies.

- Governors are mindful of their role in gathering the views of parents. They produce a governors' newsletter, carry out an annual parent survey and hold coffee mornings as a discussion forum for topics such as British values and the format of the home-school agreement.
- As a result of these combined efforts, the school has reversed its period of decline following the last inspection and the quality of leadership and management, including governance, remains good.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- From September 2017, the new teachers are inducted quickly into their roles and assigned effective mentors. A period of staff stability will be needed in order to make sure that improvements in pupils' progress are sustained.
- The good work already done to improve attendance is sustained and strengthened.
- The school's website is fully compliant with regulations.

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

Yours sincerely

Christine Watkins
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the senior leadership team. I met with groups of pupils and a group of governors, including the chair of governors. I held a telephone conversation with two representatives from the local authority. I listened to pupils read. We conducted a tour of the school together, visited many lessons and activities and looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and I evaluated a wide range of documents, including minutes of governors' meetings and safeguarding documentation. I met a number of parents informally at the beginning of the day and I considered the views of parents expressed in the 38 responses posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.