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Mr Brian Walton
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Dear Mr Walton

Short inspection of Brookside Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 January 2018 with Martin Bragg, Ofsted Inspector, 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is a larger than average primary school which consists of a mainstream provision as well as a specialist provision for over 30 pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Leaders have created a culture of inclusion throughout the school community. Pupils across the school, regardless of whether they are from the mainstream provision or the specialist provision, forge friendships, develop relationships and value the uniqueness of their school. The school also outreaches into the wider community, opening its doors to pupils over the holiday periods and working effectively with a locally based company that manufacture shoes. Such is the effectiveness of this link, that some pupils provide valuable information to the company about the shoes' comfort and quality. In return, pupils benefit from free school shoes.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils and place pupils at the heart of every decision made about the school priorities. Through thorough analysis, the leadership team have an accurate overview of the school's strengths and areas for development, also known as 'gaps' by leaders, and make well-informed decisions to further improve the school's effectiveness. Governors support the leaders well and offer proportionate challenge when required. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and are well placed to drive improvements. They have confidence in the leadership of the school and leaders and governors work effectively together with a joint moral dedication.

Since the last inspection, leaders have invested their attention on raising the quality

of teaching, learning and assessment across the school and have placed great emphasis on delivering a curriculum which is varied and rich. Leaders have also placed attention on ensuring that funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Each pupil is monitored closely and interventions are swiftly provided where needed. As a result, the progress that disadvantaged pupils made improved significantly in 2017.

At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry to consider during the day. First, we considered how the quality of teaching, learning and assessment supports pupils who were working at expectations for their age at the end of key stage 1 to make progress throughout key stage 2. Second, we explored how leaders have acted to improve outcomes in reading across key stage 1, particularly for those who were working below expectations for their age at the end of their Reception Year. Third, we considered how the specialist provision meets the varying needs of the pupils it serves, and furthermore, how pupils within the provision make progress from their different starting points.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders carry out in-depth employment checks for staff who wish to work at the school. Once employed, staff have access to high-quality training to ensure that the culture of safeguarding is of highest prominence. Leaders have invested in a new system for recording concerns about pupils. As a result, staff are well equipped to safeguard pupils in the school and know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil which require further intervention. Leaders have developed an effective system for recording these concerns. These are well organised and show where leaders have requested support from external agencies and subsequently kept pupils safe. Leaders hold weekly meetings to discuss concerns about pupils; this ensures that information is shared effectively and actions are well informed and understood while also monitoring the progress of referrals made to external agencies.

Leaders have established a culture of safeguarding where the ethos of 'it is everybody's responsibility' is embedded. Leaders carry out audits of safeguarding across the school, where the findings have been consistently strong. Leaders also invest in additional audits which are high quality and incredibly robust. Leaders monitor the school's single central register to ensure that it is kept up to date and meets statutory regulations. Early years safeguarding checks are compliant with statutory regulations. Safeguarding across the school is effective.

Inspection findings

- Pupils in key stage 2 present their work in their workbooks immaculately and reflect the high level of care and pride invested in them. They have access to the full breadth of the literacy curriculum, with key grammatical functions, sentence structures and text organisation taught to ensure that pupils have the skills required to write effectively across both fiction and non-fiction. Pupils write frequently and across a range of genres, ensuring that they have opportunities to

apply the skills they have learned in their lessons. Such is pupils' understanding, they are able to accurately identify the strengths in their writing as well as where further improvements could be made. One common area for improvement across pupils' books was application of spelling and punctuation. Leaders have already identified this and have begun work to improve this aspect of writing.

- Pupils' writing is of the highest quality, both in presentation and quality. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and pupils are eager to meet these benchmarks. Progress made by pupils by the end of key stage 2 in the last two years has improved but the proportion of pupils working at expectations for their age and beyond remained below national averages. Current pupils' books show high standards throughout, indicating that progress across key stage 2 has strengthened dramatically. In some cases, teachers' assessments of what pupils can do are underestimating the quality seen in books. Leaders acknowledge that moderation of pupils' books may be necessary to ensure accurate assessments. Nevertheless, pupils' workbooks capture clear progress where activities closely align with the emerging needs of each pupil.
- By the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check is broadly in line with national averages. This is because pupils receive high-quality phonics sessions which enable pupils to develop their skills in decoding words. However, the proportion of pupils that achieve the expected standard in reading is lower. As a result, inspection activity looked closely at how pupils develop their wider reading skills such as reading fluency and opportunities that pupils have to answer questions about what they have read. Pupils in key stage 1 have regular opportunities to read to an adult. They also have access to reading books that are matched to their particular stage of reading development. This system is well established but leaders acknowledge that there are pitfalls, in particular when offering challenge to lower-attaining pupils.
- While pupils do have opportunities to answer questions about what they have read, this is not always challenging enough for them to reach expectations for their age by the end of key stage 1. During guided reading sessions, those pupils who work with adults receive high-quality opportunities to develop their comprehension skills but for those who work independently, activities are not as well planned. Activities lack the precision required to allow those who are working below their peers to catch up.
- The specialist provision caters for pupils who have a wide range of SEN and/or disabilities, many of whom have complex and profound learning needs. Staff have established an effective, well-planned provision which allows learning programmes to be individualised and sharply tailored to individual pupils' needs. Learning is broken down into small steps, at which the pupils can achieve a high degree of success. Due to the level of expertise and care, a positive work ethic is established and pupils engage positively and successfully in learning. As a result, pupils make strong progress.
- Staff are well placed to meet the needs of the pupils. Through the appointment of specialist staff and in-house training, leaders have established a highly effective team. The specialist provision is at the 'heart of the school' as cited by

leaders and plays an integral role in day-to-day life at the school. Transitions between the specialist provision and mainstream provision are seamless; pupils do not view each provision as a separate entity but as part of the whole school community. During the inspection, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities from within the mainstream provision were seen benefiting from the specialist provision. Links and integration work successfully both ways.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the approach to writing is further embedded so that outcomes by the end of key stage 2 reflect the high quality of writing in books, and a greater proportion of pupils reach the expected standard and the higher standard
- the level of challenge in reading, in particular in reading comprehension, for those who are lower attaining in key stage 1 increases so that more pupils work at age-related expectations by the end of key stage 1.

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

Yours sincerely

Nathan Kemp
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, we spoke to you and other senior leaders. We also met with your Year 1, 2 and 3 team leader and the SENCo. We also spoke to representatives of the governing body and the leader of the specialist provision. We made visits to lessons to observe pupils and also scrutinised the work in pupils' books.

We looked at a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation and the current school development plan, as well as progress and attendance information. Additionally, we scrutinised various safeguarding records, including those relating to the suitability of staff to work with children. We also took account of 77 responses to the Parent View online survey and 59 responses to the staff survey.