

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



11 April 2018

Mrs Andrea Liversidge  
Principal  
Brookfield Primary Academy  
Lime Grove  
Swinton  
Mexborough  
South Yorkshire  
S64 8TQ

Dear Mrs Liversidge

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Brookfield Primary Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 20 and 21 March 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in September 2016. The full list of the areas for improvement that were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing board and the chief

executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Rotherham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in September 2016**

- Rapidly improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels so that:
  - all safeguarding arrangements satisfy the requirements of the most recent legislation
  - effective and robust systems are in place to hold leaders and managers to account for the progress of all groups of pupils, but particularly for those who are disadvantaged
  - leaders know the impact of pupil premium funding and target extra resources where they are needed
  - policies and procedures are up to date, being consistently implemented and regularly reviewed
  - there are effective arrangements for governance in place, which challenge leaders to bring about rapid improvement
  - the curriculum is fit for purpose and provides pupils with a broad and balanced programme of work.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and accelerate outcomes for pupils, by:
  - ensuring that all teachers have consistently high expectations for what pupils can achieve in all areas of the curriculum
  - checking that assessment information is accurate and is used to plan appropriate challenge and support for different groups of pupils, particularly the most able
  - improving teachers' subject knowledge so that they know what to teach
  - securing a stable and permanent teaching staff who are well supported by middle leaders to bring about rapid improvements
  - developing the learning environment in the Nursery class to improve curriculum provision.
- Improve attendance and behaviour by ensuring that:
  - absence of all pupils is analysed, including for specific groups of pupils, and effective action is taken to make sure that pupils are in school and ready to learn
  - the behaviour policy is consistently implemented and has a positive impact on learning in the classroom
  - all staff know how to deal with challenging behaviour and keep all pupils safe when incidents arise.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

It is recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 20 March 2018 to 21 March 2018**

### **Evidence**

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the principal, the executive principal and a school improvement leader from Aston Community Education Trust (ACET). I met with middle leaders to look at work in pupils' books. Three members of the newly formed local governing board also provided information. I observed lessons alongside you and the assistant vice-principal. I spoke with pupils in classrooms and at lunchtime. Not all areas for improvement from the inspection were considered at this inspection. The focus of this visit was to review leaders' progress against the majority of areas for improvement from the last inspection, but I was unable to consider the curriculum in depth.

### **Context**

ACET has made swift progress towards taking responsibility for your school from Wakefield City Academies Trust. The expected date for the transfer of Brookfield to ACET is 1 April 2018. Since the last monitoring visit, you have recruited a new assistant vice-principal. This member of staff will take up their post at the start of next term with explicit responsibility for supporting teaching and raising standards in Year 5. One teacher in Year 5 will end their contract and will be replaced in September. The second Year 5 teacher is currently on secondment to Brookfield and will return to their original school at the end of July.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Your leadership is a real strength. You understand the vulnerabilities of pupils and staff and work hard to mitigate these. You have worked effectively alongside staff, providing coaching and encouragement. You are kind and approachable. As a result, you are building staff morale and engendering trust among parents and carers, and school staff. Parents said that they could see a real difference in the school, especially in the last two months. They felt that communications between home and school were improving and that leaders are recruiting good teachers in response to staff turnover. With the support of the trust, you have implemented systems and routines that are beginning to help teachers to identify gaps in pupils' understanding. Working closely with the assistant vice-principal, you have made considerable improvements in a short time.

You have ensured that the safeguarding of pupils is high priority. Staff are implementing the new safeguarding policy and all have recently been trained to spot signs of radicalisation. The safeguarding officer ensures careful record keeping. She is keen to improve the speed at which families receive early help, and has met with representatives from social care to iron out difficulties in communicating safeguarding concerns. ACET has secured additional funding to purchase new fencing, gates and lighting to secure the school site further. You have adopted new

ways of tracking pupils' progress and attainment and have trained staff to understand these systems. You recognise that there is still some work to be done to ensure all teachers pitch learning appropriately. In some classes, expectations of what pupils can do, remain too low. With the support of ACET, you have introduced a focus on 'pupil improving progress' monitoring, enabling you to scrutinise what learning feels like for different groups of pupils. This is giving you the information you need to discuss the effectiveness of teaching on a much deeper level and to challenge teachers to provide learning that is better matched to pupils' needs. You and your leadership team now hold regular meetings with teachers to discuss the progress of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. Even so, you know that disadvantaged pupils continue to make less progress and achieve less well than other pupils.

You have managed to secure an active and influential local governing board whose members are determined to secure a good standard of education for pupils at Brookfield. Some are ex-pupils and are committed to the success of the school. They bring useful skills, including from education and industry, that have already proved effective in securing improvements. For example, they are promoting a walking bus to help boost pupils' attendance and punctuality. Minutes of the first meeting in December 2017 show that leaders are now providing governors with the depth of information needed to question leaders on the progress pupils are making. Leaders' action plans are focused on raising pupils' attainment and include clear indicators that will enable governors to judge when actions have been successful.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

You began by ensuring that all staff had a good understanding of the requirements of the national curriculum. Your assistant vice-principal took a central role in supporting teachers to understand and plan appropriate lessons to help pupils to more soundly acquire writing skills. You have introduced staff and pupils to high-quality texts to ignite the interest of pupils and provide a stimulus to writing. Where teachers are committed and willing to adopt new methods, pupils are attentive and making strong progress. However, this is not the case everywhere in school. Although there have been improvements, some teachers lack enthusiasm and subject knowledge. This compounds the difficulties some pupils are having in phonics or writing, for example. Therefore, the quality of teaching across the school remains inconsistent. Some teachers' expectations of what pupils will learn are still too low, hindering pupils' progress in some classes. The leader for mathematics has ensured that teachers are covering the curriculum, but there is still inconsistency in the quality of mathematics teaching in different classes. Pupils in key stage 1 are using appropriate equipment and models to help them grasp new concepts. However, there are gaps in pupils' understanding in key stage 2. In some classes, pupils have too little opportunity to develop reasoning skills.

You and the early years team have worked effectively to improve the quality of provision for Reception and Nursery children. You have ensured that children in both classes now have equal access to resources. You have maximised teachers'

skills so that staff teach across both year groups, for example in phonics. Teachers are making good use of resources to plan activities that successfully develop children's gross and fine motor skills. Both boys and girls enjoy sharing books in the outdoor reading shed and purposefully practise their writing skills in many areas inside the classroom and outdoors. Teachers have developed staff subject knowledge in phonics, enabling them to successfully match activities to children's stages of development. Children are making secure progress in phonics because of thoughtful grouping and well-matched activities. In general, children are chatty and confident when speaking with adults. Relationships between children and adults are nurturing, leading to children feeling happy and safe in the setting.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

You have embedded systems to encourage pupils to behave well and to attend school regularly. The trust continues to provide additional capacity to improve pupils' attendance, sending education welfare officers to praise pupils when they arrive punctually and to speak with parents when their child is not attending regularly. Although pupils' attendance overall is still below the national average, there has been an improvement on the same period last year. The frequent absence of several pupils remains a concern and the rate of persistent absence, despite reducing by 4%, is almost twice the national figure.

There have been no permanent or fixed-term exclusions since ACET became involved with the school last term. The number of in-school exclusions have drastically reduced, indicating a willingness by pupils to comply with the golden rule, 'to be kind, honest and helpful'. I observed a little off-task behaviour as well as pupils being helped by staff to do the right thing. However, I observed no incidents of poor behaviour during this inspection. Parents and pupils reinforced this view, saying that they felt behaviour in school was good. You have engaged the help of the local authority's social and emotional mental health team to help to support one class with friendship issues.

The leader for special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and the safeguarding officer, assisted by the trust, have a clear idea of their roles and responsibilities and execute them well to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support when they need it. You recognise that the attendance of vulnerable pupils remains a concern and are working hard with staff to help pupils to attend.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

You are now confident that the schools' assessment information gives an accurate picture of the attainment of pupils. Between 50% and 60% of children enter your Nursery with skills and abilities above those typically seen. In general, they make secure progress through key stage 1 and attain standards broadly in line with national figures. In the past, disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as other

pupils, but this is changing and differences are closing in key stage 1.

You know that, until very recently, pupils in key stage 2 have made inadequate progress and the progress of disadvantaged pupils has been unacceptably low. Pupils in upper key stage 2 have big gaps in their knowledge and understanding because of poor teaching over time. However, work in pupils' books shows that the majority are now making improved progress. Pupils are taking pride in presenting work in their books. They are learning more of the curriculum and are producing more work. Assessment information is showing that more pupils are on track to attain standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. More pupils are working at higher levels in each class than in the past. Around half of the current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined in 2018, compared to only a quarter of pupils in 2017. You acknowledge, though, that this still does not represent good enough progress from pupils' starting points.

### **External support**

Support provided by ACET has been urgent and focused. It has quickly assessed the most pressing priorities and worked with intent to address these. It has recruited a committed principal and put the full force of its resources into supporting you to improve the quality of teaching. Pupils in Year 6 have benefited from the expert teaching of specialist teachers to plug gaps in pupils' learning rapidly. Trust staff have worked alongside teachers and leaders, developing them effectively so they can have greater influence in leading their subjects. Many staff attend trust network meetings to examine the quality of work done in partner schools, helping to raise standards at Brookfield. The pastoral support provided by the trust, to improve pupils' attendance for example, or to develop provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, has been very effective. All of this had been done prior to the school formally joining the ACET family of schools.