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Mr N Obie  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Obie

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Brookside Primary School**

Following my visit to your academy on 27 March 2018, 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2017. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection, before the inspection that took place in February 2017, the school was also judged to require improvement.

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

The academy should take further action to:

- ensure that teaching and learning for key stage 1 pupils in the wider curriculum are as strong as those in English and mathematics
- ensure that leaders evaluate the effectiveness of their actions by using pupils' progress information from their starting points
- improve the school's leadership capacity further by developing the role of middle leaders.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the three assistant headteachers, the chair of the governing body, the academy trust's chief operating officer and the early years director, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated, alongside documentation relating to assessment information. I visited all year groups to look at learning with members of the leadership team. I also looked at a small sample of pupils' books. I spoke to parents and carers and pupils during the day to gather their views about the school.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection, staffing has remained stable and the school no longer employs any long-term supply teachers. The school has appointed a new assistant headteacher who is responsible for the early years. The headteacher is supported by three assistant headteachers, each with phase responsibilities for early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2.

## **Main findings**

The headteacher and senior leaders, who were new to the school at the previous inspection, have taken effective action to improve the school. They benefit from strong support provided by the academy trust. Parents value the 'open door' approach of the headteacher. Leaders have worked hard to improve parental involvement through workshops and informal discussions. For example, parents spoke positively about the 'stay and read' workshops, in which they can work with staff to help their children read.

Leaders have stabilised the staffing in the school, and this has led to increased consistency. As a result, Year 6 pupils' achievement in 2017 was strong in writing and mathematics. Leaders have had time to become more confident in their roles and responsibilities. They have a better understanding of their phase groups, and know pupils well. Leaders have prioritised the regular checking of pupils' current attainment information to ensure that it is more accurate. Consequently, leaders speak confidently about how well pupils in different groups, including disadvantaged pupils, are currently doing. However, leaders are not able to evaluate the effectiveness of their actions by understanding pupils' progress from their starting points. As a result, leaders are unable to precisely pinpoint individual pupils who may not be making the progress of which they are capable. Furthermore, middle leadership is not developed, which means senior leaders are stretched too thinly and not able to effectively scrutinise all aspects of the school's work.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving, but there is still variability. Pupils behave well in lessons because adults have high expectations. Pupils are polite and demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. There are very

few incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils typically show pride in their work, and standards of presentation are secure. In key stage 2, pupils show an increased confidence in beginning to work with complex tasks. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils demonstrate strong calculation skills when working on multi-step problems. However, the most able pupils do not receive routinely challenging work. These pupils told me that their work is too easy, particularly when teachers explain tasks that they can already do. Sometimes, the lower-ability pupils do not know how to use resources appropriately, which hinders their progress.

Leaders ensure that pupils have many opportunities to learn in the wider curriculum. Specialist teachers from the academy trust's secondary school teach pupils in performing arts and music lessons. Pupils told me they enjoy their physical education lessons. There is a range of learning activities in science, geography and history, which build on pupils' writing skills. For example, some pupils wrote diary entries linked to their topic about recycling. However, in key stage 1, pupils' provision to access the wider curriculum is weak. This is because, every afternoon, teachers in these classes support lower-ability readers as part of a new reading approach. Consequently, teaching assistants are responsible for the delivery of foundation subjects. Expectations of pupils' work are lower in the wider curriculum than in English and mathematics, particularly for lower-ability pupils. As a result, pupils in key stage 1 do not receive adequately strong provision to access the wider curriculum.

In 2017, the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check fell below the national average. Leaders are disappointed by this dip, and have been proactive in improving pupils' outcomes. The quality of teaching in phonics is more consistent, and leaders check pupils' progress in phonics regularly. Assessment information provided by leaders suggests that pupils' phonics results are likely to improve considerably in Year 1. In some phonics intervention groups, pupils are keen to learn and enthusiastically share their learning of letters and sounds. However, the quality of provision is variable across groups.

Governors reflected on judgements made at the time of the last inspection and have improved their skills of governance. They continue to support the school and are beginning to ask leaders more challenging questions. For example, governors asked leaders about the difference that pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is making on pupils' progress. Governors visit the school more regularly and look at pupils' work alongside senior leaders to gain a better understanding of the school's work.

### **External support**

Leaders benefit from ongoing support from the academy trust. Newly appointed leaders are supported well, and senior leaders demonstrate increased confidence to carry out their roles effectively.

Leaders have acted on external advice to implement a new reading approach in key stage 1. This involves teachers leaving their classes in the afternoons to help lower-ability pupils in their reading, as referred to above. These classes are taught by teaching assistants in the afternoons; this has been to the detriment of pupils' learning in the wider curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hillingdon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Noeman Anwar

**Her Majesty's Inspector**