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Mr Robert Prior
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Prior

Short inspection of Broom Leys School

Following my visit to the school on 18 April 2018, 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 September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your senior leaders, governors and trustees provide effective leadership. In November 2017, you joined the Apollo Academies Trust with other local schools. This collaboration is supporting your drive to ensure a positive school ethos where pupils enjoy learning. Leaders at all levels, including those who are relatively new to their roles, are having a positive impact on improving outcomes for pupils. You are now reviewing the precise allocation of roles and responsibilities for leaders so that everyone is clear about what is expected of them. Governors and the leaders of the trust have a clear and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas where it can improve further.

You are fully committed to offering pupils a broad and stimulating curriculum. The wide range of interesting activities supports pupils' all-round development. Parents and carers and pupils comment very positively on the number of clubs and experiences on offer. Pupils have visited the Royal Albert Hall to see the Proms, developed the school garden and participated in an extensive variety of sports, including gymnastics. The school has received a national award in recognition of its consistently high standard of sport provision. When asked what they enjoyed most in school, pupils enthused about many subjects, from history to ICT. They particularly enjoy their music lessons. Teachers and pupils benefit from working with a music specialist from another school within the trust. One pupil commented that, 'school is awesome'. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are polite and eager to learn. Older pupils in particular speak confidently about their work. They understand the need to stick at tasks when they become more difficult and, as one pupil said, 'Persevering will get you out of "the pit".' Summing up

the views of many parents, one stated, 'My child thoroughly enjoys school and all aspects of learning.'. The positive attitudes and good behaviour of the very large majority of pupils make a major contribution to their good progress.

Your school self-evaluation is accurate and honest and clearly shows the areas that leaders feel need to be improved. You and other senior leaders keep a close eye on the quality of teaching. Your feedback to teachers links directly to your comprehensive school improvement plan and to teacher appraisal. As a result, you have made good progress towards addressing the areas for improvement from the last inspection. Your accurate evaluations indicate that there are still some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics in key stage 1. You have provided good-quality support and training and this is leading to improvements.

Teachers follow the school's marking policy. You are now developing your practice so that pupils receive more verbal feedback during and after lessons. In this way, you aim to reduce teacher workload and improve the impact of the comments on pupils' later work. There are early signs of success for this initiative.

You have been successful in increasing the proportion of pupils who are working at the expected standard by the time they leave the school in Year 6. In 2017, this was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This indicates that work is pitched at the correct level for pupils. Assessment information and work in pupils' books indicate that these standards will be maintained this year. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, also made better progress than other pupils nationally in all three subjects. You and your staff are now focused on ensuring that more pupils across the school are challenged to reach the higher standard. You recognise that teachers need to develop their questioning skills further so that they consistently extend pupils' thinking during lessons. There is strong practice within the school in this area, as we saw during the inspection, but it is not yet shared as widely as it might be. You are working with other schools in the trust on this priority so that you can share ideas and effective practice.

Pupils achieve good standards in writing because of the many opportunities they have to practise their skills. They write often, and at length, in all year groups across a range of subjects. Expectations of presentation and handwriting are generally high, but this is not consistently the case, particularly for the younger pupils. There is some inconsistency of practice across classes, where pupils produce irregular handwriting or untidy work. Reversal of letters and numbers is not routinely corrected in the early years classes or in Year 1.

You have worked with parents to improve their opinion of your work and have received a national award to recognise this effort. The website contains some useful information for parents and there are regular workshops, newsletters and communications via social media. The large majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as those I spoke with, paid tribute to the work and commitment of your staff team. One parent commented, 'Staff know the children well and make them feel very welcome and included.' You recognise that some parents and staff are concerned about the behaviour of a few pupils. You have improved support for these pupils in

school and work increasingly effectively with outside agencies to ensure that their needs are met.

The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has increased over the past two years. This is particularly true for disadvantaged pupils. Your actions to address this decline have led to some recent improvements, but you rightly recognise that there is much more to be done.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders, including the governing body, have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Well-established systems are in place to ensure that pupils' safety and well-being are central to the work of the school. Leaders ensure that the required checks are completed to ensure that staff and volunteers are suitable to work in the school. Systems for identifying, recording and reporting any concerns relating to pupils' safety and well-being are strong and understood by all staff. This is because they have regular training and updates about child protection and safeguarding matters. Staff know what to do to keep pupils safe and to whom they should refer any concerns they may have. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that outside agencies fulfil their responsibilities in supporting vulnerable pupils.

Pupils know what to do to keep themselves safe when using the internet or mobile devices. Pupils are friendly and caring to each other. They say that bullying happens occasionally and staff deal with it effectively. Pupils say that they feel safe, citing the CCTV and secure gates as examples of how the school ensures this. The open railings that separate the playground from the main road cause concern for a few pupils, as members of the public sometimes stop to talk to them. Supervising staff are placed strategically to prevent this, but you plan to review how this can be further improved.

Inspection findings

- Pupils leave Broom Leys School well prepared for their secondary education. They achieve well and have positive attitudes to learning.
- In 2016 and 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in key stage 1 was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in mathematics were particularly low in 2017. Too few pupils reached the higher standard in all three subjects. Leaders rightly identified key stage 1 as a main area for improvement this academic year. Training and support for staff, rigorous analysis of gaps in pupils' learning and well-planned interventions have had a considerable impact. The school's assessment information and evidence from lessons and pupils' workbooks indicate that standards in Year 2 have risen considerably this year. Many more pupils are reaching the expected and higher standards.
- Pupils in Year 3 are also benefiting from this targeted approach and they are beginning to catch up from their low starting points. Evidence of this was seen during the inspection. Pupils were using what they had learned about the plot of 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' to write their own newspaper reports.
- During the inspection, I focused closely on the attendance of pupils. Attendance at the school has declined over the past three years and is now below the national

average. Persistent absence, particularly for those who are disadvantaged, is high. You recognised this and have employed additional staff to work with parents and to raise the profile of attendance. Your staff team makes sure that pupils are safe if not attending school by regularly keeping in touch with families. Some parents have responded positively to this initial approach and their child's attendance is improving. Others have not, and you have needed to use a range of additional strategies. You recognise that too many disadvantaged pupils are still persistently absent from school and that there is more to do in this area. You are now working closely with another school in the multi-academy trust to urgently address this issue.

- I also looked at why exclusion rates had risen and whether they were now reducing. School data showed that fixed-term exclusion rates had increased over the past two years. You are aware of this and have detailed information about the circumstances behind these figures. You have increased the levels of specialist support for pupils' pastoral needs, creating 'The Cloud', a nurture-type space where pupils can take time to be calm and discuss their concerns. Pupils benefit from the weekly visits of a trained counsellor as well as other programmes to improve their social and emotional health. As a result of these actions and the use of alternative provision for some pupils, fixed-term exclusions have fallen considerably this year.
- The pupil premium funding is used well by leaders. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 achieved similar standards to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. They also made better progress from their starting points than other pupils. School assessment information indicates that these standards will be maintained this year. However, standards in other key stages were not as high for this group in 2017. This year, leaders have provided additional support for disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 to help them make faster progress in reading. This has been successful and, as a result, the proportion of pupils who are working at the expected standard is improving. In the early years foundation stage, support has been provided to develop children's language and communication skills. As a result, an increased proportion of children are on track to reach a good level of development.
- Leaders have ensured that the emotional and social needs of disadvantaged pupils are increasingly well supported. Funding is used to employ additional staff who work with pupils on a regular basis. This has been successful in enabling these pupils to develop a positive attitude to school life and engage more successfully in their learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers in all classes have high expectations for the standards that pupils can achieve, particularly as they move from early years to key stage 1
- teachers use the existing good practice in the school to improve their questioning skills so they consistently challenge and extend the thinking of all pupils and enable more to reach the higher standard
- rates of persistent absence, particularly of disadvantaged pupils, continue to fall so that they are at least in line with national averages.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Apollo Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Sanchez-Thompson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited 15 classes with you and the deputy headteacher to observe teaching, learning and assessment. We also checked the progress of children in the Reception classes and of pupils in Years 1, 2, 3 and 6 in their workbooks. We discussed the school's effectiveness and the actions taken to ensure the school's continued improvement.

I met with leaders with responsibility for mathematics, key stage 1 and early years. I spoke with two members of the local governing body and the executive headteacher of the trust. I met with a group of pupils from Years 2 to 6 and talked informally with other pupils in lessons and during playtime. I met with parents on the playground at the beginning of the school day.

I looked at a range of documents, including your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the school's improvement plan. I also scrutinised the school's safeguarding systems, records and associated documents. I checked assessment information on how well pupils are achieving. I considered 105 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 51 free-text comments from parents and one comment submitted directly to Ofsted. I also considered 50 responses to the online staff questionnaire.