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Dear Ms Lloyd

Short inspection of Broom Valley Community School

Following my visit to the school on 3 May 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 December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. However, it has been a turbulent journey between the two inspections. Following a decline in standards and the quality of teaching after the last inspection, the school is only just returning to its good performance after the rapid improvements since your appointment as headteacher in 2016. You are incredibly ambitious for the pupils and staff and have clearly articulated your vision for the school's improvement. You took swift action to address inadequacies in teaching so that pupils have access to the education which they deserve. The necessary upheaval to staffing has now settled. Effective recruitment over the last two years has enabled an almost entirely new set of leaders and teachers to begin a transformation of the school. A wider range of leaders are now developing in their roles, which in turn is bringing additional capacity for further improvement. Consequently, the rate of improvement has picked up apace this year.

The school has a challenging context, with 26 languages, high mobility and many newcomers who are also new to learning English. However, you make no excuses about any underperformance and have a strong desire for all pupils to succeed. As another leader said: 'Everyone has bought into the vision.' Your newly formed leadership team is highly motivated and is very clear about the strategies it is using to support the raising of standards throughout the school. Leaders are providing effective coaching, training and development for individual teachers. This has been particularly important given that many of them are new to the school within the last year or two. The extensive induction which teachers receive, along with ongoing support and development, is ensuring a greater consistency of approach to

teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, pupils' outcomes improved in 2017 in reading, writing and mathematics at both key stages 1 and 2. Attainment was still below the national average in key stage 1. However, at key stage 2, attainment was in line with the national average in writing and was above national figures for mathematics. Leaders have sustained these improvements. Work in books and lessons, along with leaders' assessment information, confirm that current pupils are making increasingly strong progress.

You have a very secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. On taking up your post, you were acutely aware of the need for reading standards to be improved and have prioritised reading in the school's improvement planning. As a result, the teaching of reading and phonics is improving and pupils are enjoying reading more widely and often. You are fully aware that standards in reading still lag behind those in writing and mathematics and that reading remains the school's greatest priority.

At the last inspection, leaders were tasked with improving the quality of the curriculum so that pupils had opportunities to develop subject-specific skills in subjects beyond English and mathematics. On your arrival at the school, you realised that the curriculum was not fit for purpose and started to transform the curriculum experience which pupils received. Subject leaders and teams are now in place. You make sure that teachers' interest and expertise is used to champion each subject. The topic themes are evolving over time so that they become more responsive to the local area and the interests of pupils. However, you recognise that further development is needed so that standards improve across the wider curriculum.

The governing body receives detailed reports from senior leaders about the school's performance. Governors acknowledge that arrangements to gather first-hand views of the school's work are at an early stage. However, they recently commissioned a review of governance to help them identify how they can increase their impact and hold leaders more rigorously to account. A more efficient way of holding meetings has been introduced. Additionally, governors have begun recruiting new members who have the skills and expertise required to further support school improvement. Governors are just starting to implement these changes, so it is too early to see their impact at present.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders are passionate about the importance of safeguarding. You have made sure that procedures are effective and records are detailed and of high quality. A committed team keeps a close check on vulnerable pupils. They make sure that pupils receive the most appropriate support, which includes the use of external agencies when necessary. Well-established systems, such as the regular concern audits, keep pupils' safety as a top priority. Training is successful in helping staff to recognise and respond to signs of concern. Leaders also provide important safeguarding updates for parents via the monthly newsletters.

Relationships are strong between staff and pupils. There is a nurturing and caring approach which pupils value and which contributes to their positive attitudes to learning. Consequently, as a result of such positive relationships, pupils are confident that they know who to speak to if they are worried at all. Records show very few incidents of bullying. However, some pupils did report that bullying occurs more often than the records would suggest. You are keen to investigate this further.

Inspection findings

- Over time and in all key stages, reading has been the weakest aspect of pupils' outcomes. However, new leaders have been swift to introduce a range of strategies to support pupils in developing a love of reading. Reading is now high profile in school. The new and quirky library, displays in corridors and classrooms, along with book areas in each class, show that reading is highly valued. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of high-quality and age-appropriate texts. They respond by developing a greater interest and increasing enjoyment in reading.
- A focus on developing pupils' vocabulary is also evident throughout the school, as leaders have identified this as one of the main barriers to pupils' achievement. Pupils are frequently accessing a wide range of vocabulary, which they discuss regularly in their response to reading. This is broadening pupils' written and spoken language as well as helping them to understand the texts they read. Additionally, high expectations from staff about pupils' written and verbal responses are resulting in proficiency in using a variety of sentence structures. Teachers routinely use scaffolds and prompts to support pupils in the language needed to explain their answers and justify their ideas. Consequently, pupils are better able to judge the formality required in their writing and to make ambitious word choices which are precise and appropriate for the audience.
- Key stage 2 reading progress was in the lowest 20% in 2016 and 2017 for high prior-attaining pupils. However, leaders are particularly effective in their roles and are continually improving the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Work in pupils' books shows how the most able pupils are challenged effectively. This is because teachers have developed the necessary subject knowledge to support them in providing the right feedback and questioning to develop pupils' thinking and understanding. As a result, pupils demonstrate that they are able to produce increasingly detailed responses to their reading, making effective use of the new words they have acquired.
- The early years leader is influencing practice in both Nursery and Reception and is ensuring that there is a language-rich environment where children are given a wealth of experiences to develop their spoken language. Story areas in each classroom enable children to be immersed in books and have frequent opportunities for storytelling and listening to an adult read stories to them. As a result, more children are on track to reach the early learning goal for reading this year.
- You have made improvements to the teaching of phonics and began by establishing a new and more consistent approach. Phonics lessons typically benefit from a multi-sensory approach, which supports pupils with understanding

the meaning of unfamiliar words. Pupils' books show how they are applying their developing phonics knowledge when writing. The early years leader has provided training and support for staff to improve the quality and impact of their teaching. This has been successful in most cases. However, leaders are aware that it is not fully consistent across all classes. You have taken action to quickly provide additional teaching capacity where pupils are not making as much progress.

- Pupils who did not meet the phonics standard in Year 1 are being well supported, and many of them are catching up and expected to meet the standard by the end of Year 2. Their books are well matched to their phonics knowledge. This supports them in reading with greater confidence and fluency. However, some of the pupils have differing levels of support for their reading at home. You are keen to make sure that no pupils are disadvantaged by their home experience.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the improvements seen in pupils' phonics knowledge and reading attainment are sustained so that an increasing proportion of pupils meet at least the expected standard by the end of each key stage
- continuing development of the curriculum and the role of subject leaders raises standards in subjects beyond English and mathematics
- governance is developed further by acting on the suggestions made in the recent review of governance.

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

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, assistant headteachers, leaders of learning, the school business manager and the safeguarding team. I also met with three members of the governing body, including the chair, and I met with a representative of the local authority. I evaluated documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance records and information about safeguarding. We visited classrooms together to observe teaching and learning. Together with an assistant headteacher and two leaders of learning, we scrutinised the work of a sample of pupils. I listened to four pupils read. I spoke with several parents and carers at the start of the school day and considered the

one response to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I talked to a sample of pupils and staff during lunchtime and also took into consideration the nine responses to the staff survey and the 13 responses to the pupil survey.