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Mr Gary Kenny
Headteacher
Brookside Primary School
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Dear Mr Kenny

Short inspection of Brookside Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 October 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 November 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, together with governors, identify the main priorities for improvement and involve all staff in working towards them. You have high aspirations for your pupils and expect them to achieve well.

You and the senior leadership team consider how best to modify the curriculum and teaching methods to meet the needs of your pupils and maintain above-average standards. For example, you have introduced a whole-school approach to mathematics to better develop pupils' mastery of mathematical concepts and you have established a consistent approach to the teaching of spelling, with a positive effect on improving pupils' writing.

Parents and carers are very positive about the school's work. They value the way in which the school nurtures their children academically and personally. This is verified by this typical parental comment: 'My children are excited to go to school every day and enjoy the challenges and achievements each day brings.' Parents appreciate the strong community feel within the school and the links with the local community. You have rightly identified ways to widen the curriculum to deepen pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity of British society and of people and places further afield.

The pupils I spoke with during my visit said they enjoy their learning. They like taking on roles and responsibilities, such as being 'Peacemakers'. When I listened to pupils read, they spoke keenly about their favourite authors and their enjoyment of reading. Leaders ensure that pupils read widely and provide extra help for those who need to catch up. Staff use books and stories in a variety of ways to inspire pupils' thinking and as a starting point for their writing.

You and your senior leaders promote teamwork among your staff. Teachers share ideas with each other and receive guidance from more experienced members of staff, although some of the good practice in motivating pupils to write is not shared widely enough. You are developing the leadership skills of subject leaders to help them more fully evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

Since the previous inspection, when you were asked to ensure that pupils in key stage 1 built upon what they already know and can do, you have improved links between the early years and Year 1. Staff share the information they have about children's progress so that, by the end of Year 2, pupils consistently reach above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

You have moved forward in ensuring that key stage 2 pupils receive sufficiently challenging tasks in writing, which you were asked to improve at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers challenge pupils to think about storyline, plot and characters before they write. They expect pupils to use what they know about grammar, punctuation and spelling whenever they write. Pupils write for a range of purposes and I saw some good examples in pupils' books of interesting writing during a geography topic. There is room, however, for pupils to write more extensively in a range of subjects. Occasionally, some pupils do not receive the ongoing help they need to consolidate their basic writing skills or enough motivation to make them eager to write.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, senior leaders and governors ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are of high quality and fit for purpose. You instil in staff that the safety and welfare of pupils are the responsibilities of all. You ensure that staff receive relevant training and know how to report any concerns. The checks carried out on adults who work with pupils are thorough. You maintain detailed and confidential records on any child protection concerns and work with external agencies to resolve any issues that arise.

You ensure that pupils learn about e-safety and how to deal with bullying. The pupils I spoke with confirmed they feel safe in school. When I asked them about bullying, they said it is not a problem in their school but felt confident that any incidents that do occur are dealt with. They spoke sensibly about the different forms bullying may take.

You use guidance and workshops provided by outside visitors, such as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, to reinforce pupils' learning on how

to keep themselves safe. For older pupils, teachers use current affairs to develop pupils' awareness of potential risks, such as those presented by exploitation and extremism.

Inspection findings

- In the early years, staff ensure that children make good gains from their starting points. They modify the curriculum to help boys to achieve well, especially in reading, writing and number. As a result, the school's most recent information shows that any differences in performance between boys and girls are diminishing strongly.
- The good transition arrangements for children moving to Year 1 mean that teachers are well informed of children's previous learning. The consistent approach to the teaching of phonics, mathematics and literacy introduced by leaders builds pupils' knowledge and skills in Year 1 and Year 2.
- Pupils are now making stronger progress than previously in writing. Leaders check that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of key writing skills throughout the school to help pupils to write well. When teachers inspire pupils to share their ideas and motivate writing well, pupils' response is very positive. For some pupils, however, progress slows because they are not helped quickly enough to strengthen their basic skills. There is some variation in how well tasks in English and other subjects inspire pupils to write.
- Leaders gather information about the progress individual pupils and groups of pupils make. They analyse how well pupils are doing in each year group. The information is reviewed regularly with staff and provides a clear view of which pupils are doing well and those who need extra help in order to make strong progress. Leaders match progress information to the checks they make on the quality of teaching and the work they see in books. As a result, they provide staff with feedback on how to improve, and they evaluate whether additional funding, for example the pupil premium, is having a positive effect on pupils' achievement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide the right level of help during lessons for those pupils who need to practise their basic writing skills
- the good practice already in the school, which effectively motivates pupils to write in English and other subjects, is shared with staff.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Nottinghamshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Vivienne McTiffen
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the assistant headteachers and staff. We discussed the school's progress information and we looked at examples of writing in pupils' books. We visited some classes together to observe the teaching of literacy. I met the chair of the governing body and four other governors. I spoke to pupils about their work during lessons. I also met with a group of pupils and they showed me their writing in topic, science and religious education work. I listened to pupils read and I observed activities at lunchtime. I took into account the 51 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the written comments submitted by parents. I analysed the 19 responses to the questionnaire completed by staff. I scrutinised the single central record of recruitment checks, looked at documentation relating to safeguarding and discussed the school's safeguarding procedures with you and staff. I also looked at the school's self-evaluation and the improvement plan.