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Mrs Tina Long
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Long

Short inspection of Bromley Heath Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 4 June 2019, 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 October 2015.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You lead the school with determination and passion and are held in the highest regard by staff and parents. Together with your effective deputy, you have built strong teaching teams. They share your commitment to ensuring that the school provides the very best for all its pupils.

Following the previous inspection, you set the school on an ambitious path of improvement. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 has improved significantly in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2018, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in these subjects was above the national average, as was the number of pupils working at greater depth. Early indications from the scaled results for the teacher assessments in 2019 show that these standards have been exceeded. Nearly all pupils currently in Year 2 are reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics; over half are working at greater depth in reading and mathematics; and a third are working at this higher level in writing. The small proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school now reach similar, or higher, standards to their peers.

You have maintained the high quality of education in the early years foundation stage. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has been significantly above average for the last three years. School assessments records, coupled with observations of children's work, point to these strong outcomes being maintained in the current year.

The number of pupils reaching the expected standard in the national phonics screening check dipped in 2017. You took prompt and decisive action and the proportion reaching this standard improved significantly in 2018. Inspection evidence shows that this improvement has continued and currently nearly all pupils in Year 2 are at or above the phonics standards expected nationally.

Despite the strong gains of recent years, you show no signs of complacency. You and your governors have a very good understanding of what the school does well, and what it needs to do to improve further. For instance, you are acutely aware that although pupils' attainment in writing has greatly improved, this is not always well displayed in their topic books.

Governors are highly ambitious for the school. There is a positive, professional relationship between governors and staff. Governors provide the right balance of support and challenge to leaders. They understand the importance of holding leaders to account and are very well informed about how well the school is doing.

Bromley Heath Infants is a welcoming, caring school. Staff make every effort to ensure that any obstacles to learning that are placed in the way of its pupils are overcome. There is a very positive atmosphere in classrooms and teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils. Pupils respond with enthusiasm and eagerness and most are happy learners, relishing all that the school has to offer them.

You reach out to your local community in a positive way. Parents speak highly of the school, and one parent echoed the views of many when saying: 'My daughter loves school. She has flourished academically and has had so many wonderful opportunities, from the trip to Berkley Castle, to sports day and to world book club to enrichment with the junior school. I wouldn't hesitate to recommend the school to other parents.'

At the previous inspection, you were asked to raise the achievement of pupils so that more reach the highest levels, particularly in writing. You have made strong progress in this area and currently around half of the pupils in Year 2 are working at this higher standard. You were also asked to make sure that leaders rigorously monitor the effectiveness of your actions to make improvements to the school. Leaders at all levels, including governors, are reflective and analytical. They routinely evaluate all their actions and make sure that they are focused on those that have the most impact on pupils' well-being and their academic outcomes.

Safeguarding is effective

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that effective action is taken to safeguard pupils. Training is up to date, records are meticulously maintained and the pre-employment checks on teachers and other staff are thorough.

All pupils are kept out of harm as a result of strong pastoral and multi-agency work. Staff and governors receive regular high-quality training and are able to carry out the school's policy and procedures well, ensuring a secure culture of vigilance.

Staff are clear about their responsibilities and know what to do if they have any concerns over pupils' welfare. Records are well kept, referrals are made in a timely manner and outside agencies are used appropriately.

Inspection findings

At the start of the inspection, we agreed the particular aspects of the school's work on which the inspection would focus.

- The first line of enquiry considered whether pupils' gains in reading, writing and mathematics, seen in recent years, were being maintained. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was above average in 2018 and a very high proportion reached the expected standards in these subjects.
- School information shows that recently received scaled scores for the teachers' assessments of current Year 2 pupils' standards in these subjects have continued to improve. This was supported by evidence seen during our learning walks and scrutiny of Year 2 pupils' books.
- Pupils' reading skills are of a very high order. Our observations of pupils' reading, in class and individually, showed that pupils are consistently developing habits of becoming regular and enthusiastic readers. Pupils read with fluency and understanding. They readily answer questions on interpretation of the texts they had been reading, reflecting their strong comprehension skills.
- You are making sure that there is a consistent approach to developing high-quality writing skills across all classes. Our scrutiny of pupils' writing showed that pupils are developing a very secure understanding of grammar and fluency in their writing. Pupils relish their writing, saying that they are proud of the improvements they have made over the year. They show great stamina in their writing, producing lengthy pieces in a wide range of styles. However, these skills are not well developed in their work across all subjects of the curriculum. Pupils' writing in their topic books is sometimes scant and brief.
- Pupils' spelling is improving and the most able pupils can confidently spell difficult words that allow them to write expressively. Pupils' workbooks show a steady improvement in their handwriting. Throughout the last year, pupils became increasingly proficient at writing for a variety of audiences and in various styles by using grammatical constructions closely linked to the expectations for their age.
- Staff have responded with enthusiasm and determination to make sure that pupils continue to make strong gains in mathematics. Work in books shows that most pupils are confident in their number work. They show a good understanding of mathematical reasoning and are able to solve complex number problems confidently and apply earlier mastered concepts to unfamiliar situations.
- The second line of enquiry looked at the extent to which pupils' phonics skills have improved. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics check in 2017 dipped to just below average. You quickly reviewed your approaches to the teaching of phonics, ensuring greater consistency and rigour across all classes. This is paying dividends. In 2018 the proportion reaching the standard expected nationally was just above average. Current pupils in the school have exceeded this figure and 96% of the current Year 2 are expected to have reached the national standard.
- Children enjoy experimenting with sounds and words. Staff give a high priority to modelling speech sounds in words accurately. There is a precise focus on developing children's love of singing, rhymes, and exploring books and early reading. Pupils are able to recognise letters and the sounds they represent. They are able to blend and segment these together to

create words and to place these in a meaningful context by writing simple and then more complex sentences.

- The final line of enquiry looked at how well the small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school are doing in relation to their peers. Leaders have used the pupil premium funding to provide specific staff and resources to support a number of initiatives to promote the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, school assessment information shows that the small number of disadvantaged pupils attain as well as others in the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' work in all subjects enables them to develop the same high levels of writing skills as seen in their English books.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, governors and the school improvement advisor from the local authority. We visited classrooms together to assess pupils' attainment and learning in reading, writing and mathematics. We looked at pupils' workbooks and talked with pupils in lessons. I held a discussion with a group of pupils from Year 2 and also listened to pupils from this year read. We considered the school's information on the attainment being made by current pupils.

I looked at a range of documentary evidence. This included the school's evaluation of its own performance and plans for improvement. I also looked at various documents related to safeguarding, including the single central record.

I gathered views from parents and took account of the 35 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. I received 60 free-text responses and spoke with parents at the end of the school day.