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18 October 2019

Mr S Robertson  
Executive Headteacher  
Broadlands Primary School  
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Herefordshire  
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Dear Mr Robertson

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

Following my visit to your school on 9 October 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

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

The school should take further action to ensure that:

- teachers have high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work
- the agreed approach to teaching handwriting is embedded and applied consistently across all year groups
- in mathematics, pupils have more opportunity to consolidate and deepen their understanding in problem-solving and reasoning, particularly the most able pupils
- subject leaders receive ongoing support and guidance to drive forward the revised curriculum plans, ensuring that they reflect leaders' ambitions
- teachers are supported effectively to deliver and assess the expected knowledge and skills in each subject across the curriculum.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings took place with the executive headteacher, the executive deputy headteacher, the deputy headteacher (primary) and the head of learning at the school to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The inspector met with staff and visited lessons. The inspector met with the chair of governors and two staff governors and spoke to the local authority officer responsible for school improvement on the telephone. The school development plan was evaluated. The inspector reviewed minutes of governing body meetings, curriculum plans and records of monitoring activities. The inspector also looked at pupils' books, spoke to pupils about their work and listened to pupils read. She spoke to pupils at breaktime about behaviour and how they learn to stay safe.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection, there have been some changes to staffing. The leadership structure across the federation has been revised. A new leadership post has been created, with responsibility for the quality of primary education across all schools in the federation. The school has appointed two newly qualified teachers.

## **Main findings**

It is clear that Broadlands Primary School has come a long way since the last inspection. Teachers say that the school is now a much happier place. Leaders have taken very effective action to bring about much-needed improvements. As a result, pupils' achievement in external tests at the end of key stage 2 in 2019 were much stronger than in previous years. In 2019, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the expected standard and the higher standard was at least in line with the national averages. This is a significant achievement, of which staff, governors and leaders are rightly proud.

Leaders' actions to tackle the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection are now bearing fruit. There has been a culture change for the better in school. The professional development provided for teachers is now more strategically focused on school priorities. Teachers work closely with other schools across the federation and elsewhere to share ideas about what works. Teachers now have opportunities to visit other classes and schools to see good practice. All these things are really helping teaching to improve.

A new approach to gathering and analysing assessment information is helping teachers to assess pupils' progress more easily. Teachers welcome the professional discussions they have with leaders to help them to identify appropriate next steps for their pupils. In lessons, teachers use assessment information to adapt the curriculum to address pupils' learning needs more precisely.

There is now a more focused approach to the teaching of spelling. Pupils learn new

spellings every week. Leaders say that parents and carers are happy with this because they can support their children to learn the spellings over the weekend. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers now pick up on spelling errors and expect pupils to learn the correct spellings so that they do not repeat the mistakes in future work. One pupil, who was very proud that he is good at spelling, said, 'Miss says I am a walking dictionary!'

Leaders have adopted a whole-school approach to the teaching of handwriting, which starts with letter formation and mark-making in the early years. In the combined Reception and Nursery class, pupils are already practising letter formation which is consistent with the new style of cursive handwriting. However, the quality of pupils' handwriting varies across subjects and year groups. This is because the new approach to teaching handwriting is not yet fully embedded. It will take time for the legacy of previously low expectations of pupils' handwriting to be overcome.

In mathematics, pupils now have regular opportunities to practise their reasoning skills. They are asked to explain their thinking more frequently. Pupils are offered three levels of challenge, which include problem-solving. Pupils enjoy these challenges. However, there is room for the most able pupils to be challenged further.

Teachers now teach 'reading for meaning' lessons every day. This coordinated approach helps teachers to teach reading comprehension more effectively. Teachers have benefited from effective support and training to improve their subject knowledge and learn the new approach. Alongside this, leaders have ensured that high-quality books are available in school. Pupils are encouraged to read through a list of 100 recommended books before they leave primary school. There is now a reading zone in the playground at lunchtime. As a result of all these changes, pupils say they love reading. Pupils' reading comprehension skills are building over time.

In the early years, there have been significant changes to the provision. The Nursery and Reception classes are now combined. There have also been staff changes. Staff have worked closely with another local school to improve the provision. Children in the early years settle quickly and are very happy. Everyday routines, such as tidying away and lining up, help to develop children's social skills. Children are confident and talk often to each other and to adults. However, when they start school, some children struggle to make themselves understood. Leaders have identified this as a top priority. As a result of the support put in place, adults now design more effective activities to support children's language and vocabulary development. For example, during the inspection, some children role-played shopping with a toy cash register and a basket of fruit. The adult said the name of the fruit and asked the children to repeat it. She then put the word into a sentence, which she encouraged pupils to repeat. This systematic approach is helping to strengthen children's communication skills.

Leaders are not complacent. They know that, despite the successes so far, there is still more work to do to improve the quality of education in the school. They have

started to revise the curriculum plans for each subject area. Subject leaders have developed detailed curriculum plans for each subject. These set out the knowledge and skills pupils are expected to learn year by year in each subject. This is a strong start and there are plans to review and revise the plans further. Subject leaders are already playing an important part in this process. They visit lessons and look at pupils' books to see how the curriculum plans are being implemented in their subjects. They share good practice with all staff in meetings. The next step is to ensure that teachers can assess pupils' subject-specific learning effectively. Subject leaders would benefit from further guidance from senior leaders to ensure that leaders' ambitions for the curriculum are reflected in the new plans.

School development plans are sharply focused on the key areas for improvement. Leaders have acted on advice to improve these documents so that they can more easily measure progress against them. Governors regularly observe leaders' monitoring activities so that they can see for themselves the progress the school is making. Leaders provide detailed reports to governors through committees. In this way, leaders are held to account for the school's performance.

Governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are pleased with the improving standards but they are equally pleased with the positive changes in the culture of the school. They monitor teachers' work-life balance because they know that happy staff will stay with the school and that this is key to the school's further improvement.

### **External support**

The local authority understands the school's needs well and has put in place comprehensive support through another local school. This partnership is proving very valuable in moving the school forwards. The school engages well with the support provided and actively seeks out further support if it is needed.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Spilsbury  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**