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Miss P Briggs
Brockworth Primary Academy
Moorfield Road
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Gloucestershire
GL3 4JL

Dear Miss Briggs

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Brockworth Primary Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 30–31 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the academy's predecessor school was judged to be a school causing concern.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the Principal, groups of pupils, parents, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the academy trust.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The academy is making reasonable progress in raising standards for all pupils.

Context

The school became an academy in September 2012. It is part of an overarching academy trust which runs several academies. There are 193 pupils on roll aged 4 to 11 years. A higher than average proportion of pupils is in receipt of pupil premium

funding (government money for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families, and those children who are looked after). A small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. About one quarter of the pupils has special educational needs, though there is a below average proportion of pupils who have school action plus support or have statements of special educational needs. The senior team are not all substantive appointments.

Achievement of pupils at the academy

Pupils across the school are now making better progress. Older pupils, who in previous years had not made enough progress, are catching up well and they are reaching the levels expected nationally. Their attainment in English and mathematics is broadly where it should be. Most of the younger children, from very varied starting points, enter Year 1 with the skills and level of development expected for their age. From an early age children develop good communication skills. Pupils speak with confidence in all age groups and are able to successfully contribute their ideas and thoughts in lessons.

Pupils of all groups, backgrounds and starting points are making accelerated progress from their very varied starting points. The gap between pupils who are eligible for pupil premium money and those who are not is closing rapidly. It is now much smaller than in previous years. Successful action to support any pupils falling behind is helping them to make more rapid progress, especially in reading. Some pupils make outstanding progress, their reading ages improving by several months in a very short time.

Pupils are developing good phonic (the sounds that letters make) knowledge which enables them to successfully 'have a go' and read any unfamiliar words in a text. Pupils are successfully increasing their mathematical skills, especially in handling number and carrying out calculations. Older pupils are developing the skills that they need to investigate and solve mathematical problems. Improvement in pupils' skills in English and mathematics are not always evident in their wider work in other subjects. Pupils' skills in presenting neat and well-organised work are not developing as well as they should. This means that good learning is not reflected in pupils' books in all subjects.

There are still some variations in pupils' progress between classes and groups of pupils, for example between boys and girls. There are, however, no overall patterns of underachievement across the school. Variations in progress are quickly spotted. When pupils are not doing as well as expected discussions take place between senior leaders and class teachers. This helps to find out why pupils are not doing so well and then put actions in place to remedy the underperformance.

The quality of teaching

The academy's own checks show that teaching is improving and that more is now good and some is outstanding. Inspection evidence shows that some teaching still requires improvement. The overall improved teaching is leading to a higher proportion of pupils making good and sometimes outstanding progress.

Teachers know their pupils well. They have very detailed information about how well their pupils are achieving. When this is used effectively it ensures that pupils' tasks are well matched to their specific learning needs.

Teachers' behaviour management is good and consistent across all classes. Lessons run smoothly. Individual, paired and group activities are evident in all classes and the range of strategies used helps to ensure that pupils' interest is maintained. Teachers' questioning of pupils and the opportunities that they have to work together successfully let pupils share ideas and thoughts. This helps pupils to suitably develop their speaking and listening skills.

Relationships between staff and pupils are good. The atmosphere in classes promotes a good climate for learning. Pupils' contributions are valued. Their moral and social attitudes develop well and pupils are keen to succeed.

The small group of parents who met with inspectors said that they were very happy with the quality of teaching. They felt that if they had concerns teachers were very approachable.

Some teaching is not as precise or as effective as the best. Activities are sometimes not thought through well enough. Where this happens:

- explanations lack pace, sharpness and clarity
- work is not challenging enough to stretch all pupils
- activities do not always have the potential for all pupils to be working hard all through the lesson.

Teachers regularly mark pupils' work but marking is not of a consistently high quality. There is some good quality marking of specific pieces of work which very clearly praises pupils' successes and makes comments about how to improve. Other marking is not ensuring that errors identified are followed-up and corrected as quickly as they should be. Therefore, mistakes re-occur. Marking does not always model neat presentation.

Teaching assistants often make valuable contributions to learning both in class and in group work, for example when guiding pupils to deepen their understanding, clarifying tasks or keeping pupils on track to finish their work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' good behaviour contributes very effectively to their learning. Parents said that behaviour had improved since the academy opened. Pupils have very good and positive attitudes to learning and lessons run smoothly. Incidents of very poor behaviour, bullying of any sort and exclusions are now rare. Behaviour in whole-academy gatherings, such as assemblies, is exemplary. There is a consistent and effective approach to managing behaviour. Pupils respond well to the clear expectations that are set. Pupils are polite and courteous.

Attendance is improving because the academy has a concerted effort to follow-up any absences. Pupils are mostly keen to come to academy.

The quality of leadership in and management of the academy

The headteacher and senior leaders are working together effectively, and have clear plans, to drive improvements forward. Academy plans are carefully and regularly reviewed and evaluated.

There is a strong emphasis on raising achievement in English and mathematics. The plans are working. Pupils' achievements, especially those who are most likely to fall behind in their learning, are improving quickly. This means that the next group of pupils leaving for their secondary education are much better prepared. Pupils say that they feel confident about moving on. Teachers are held to account when their pupils do not make the progress expected of them.

When any remaining weaknesses in the academy's provision are identified, for example in teaching, there is some scope for the headteacher and senior leaders to follow these up and put them right more quickly. Appropriate procedures to manage teachers' performance are in place.

Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to raise the achievements of those pupils eligible to receive it.

The governing body is newly formed and is currently establishing its role in supporting and challenging the leadership of the academy. During this period of transition it is working very closely with the overarching academy trust. This is ensuring that the momentum of improvement is not lost.

The headteacher has made a good start in strengthening partnerships with parents and raising the profile of the academy in the community but she is aware that there is still more to do regarding this aspect of the academy's work.

External support

The academy trust has very successfully managed the transfer of the predecessor school to becoming an academy. It has provided good strategic support and advice on a range of issues covering all aspects of the academy's work. It continues to provide and arrange consultant support on issues of teaching, curriculum provision and personnel matters. It is ensuring that the new governing body has the skills it needs to be an effective part of the leadership and management of the academy.

The academy trust takes a very robust and rigorous approach to monitoring the academy's performance.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Towl
Her Majesty's Inspector