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Shirley Frankis
Executive headteacher
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Dear Mrs Frankis

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Broad Oak Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 9 November 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that all assessment work is aligned to current national assessment frameworks by:
 - judging pupils' work against expected standards for their age, especially in mathematics
- adjust self-evaluation activity to take account of current practice by, for example:
 - referring to the performance of the most able pupils as a group
 - using a wider range of information to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment than lesson observations alone.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I reviewed the school's summary of its self-evaluation, the most recent school improvement plan, and notes of visits to the school undertaken by governors and external supporters. The head of school led me on a brief tour and we conducted a lengthy review of learning, taking in each class. You showed me several documents which you use to check how well the pupils are doing. We discussed, in detail, recently published results.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, which judged the school to require improvement, three new members of staff have joined the school. The head of school has altered her workload to be able to concentrate on strategic leadership activities. Other teachers have adjusted their working patterns for a range of different reasons.

Main findings

You responded positively to the inspection, even though the judgement was disappointing. You quickened the rate at which you were already making changes. Leaders immediately began to focus attention on ensuring that pupils' attitudes to learning strengthened, and redoubled efforts to ensure pupils' behaviour did not impede their progress any longer.

You revised your development priorities following the inspection. You decided justifiably to focus effort on improving teaching. You made this decision on the correct assumption that this would be the best way to raise levels of pupils' performance. You recognise, for example, that the most able pupils do not do well enough. Few reach the higher levels of which they are capable, write at greater depth than is expected or work in mathematics at levels which exceed national expectations. We agreed that the improvement plan and self-evaluation document would benefit from referring specifically to this particular group of pupils.

Leaders, teachers and the site staff have undertaken a range of improvements to the environment, which is now pleasant, clean and tidy. This process was helped by necessary alterations to the premises under The Equalities Act, 2010. You have made good use of limited space. Pupils respect the environment. They also respect each other and the adults who work with them. Adults work cooperatively so that there is a purposeful working atmosphere in each class. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to learning and also support the effective management of behaviour at break and lunchtimes.

You showed me a lot of useful information about current pupils' progress and attainment. You also indicated how you are continuing to align all of the school's

work more closely with the new national assessment frameworks. We looked closely at analyses of results from the 2016 round of tests. We agreed that there is improvement over time and that outcomes are likely to be better in 2017 at the end of key stage 2. We also agreed that there remains a considerable way to go before you can be certain that forecasts are secure.

You expressed concerns, rightly, about outcomes in mathematics in 2016. Governors share your concerns. Governors are fully supportive of the additional training that has been provided to staff to develop their practice. They are also supporting the arrangements you have in place that enable teachers to check their work against that of teachers in other schools locally. The local authority has also enabled teachers to compare pupils' work with pupils in other East Sussex schools. Governors also noted the intention to explore how pupils answered questions in 2016, to establish if any lessons can be learned for the coming assessment round.

We saw some accurate assessment work in the early years, with impressive use of learning journals. This means that children are getting a good start to their time in school. Teaching in Reception is really well focused on ensuring that children make secure learning gains from each activity. We observed children responding effectively to the teacher's questions and displaying good levels of oracy. Children had just been on a visit to the Hastings Sea-Life centre. This rich learning experience was being used well to support the development of language. Some of the children had used this experience to make marks such as 'S', as they began to form words like 'shark'. A small minority were able to apply this learning to the writing out of their name.

Leaders had arranged helpfully for teachers to leave out examples of pupils' work as we toured the school. We saw accurate assessment work in both key stages 1 and 2. All teachers follow the school's assessment policy assiduously. It is clear that you have worked hard to standardise assessment practice across the school. Pupils' work in many of their books showed clearly how they had responded to teachers' feedback and improved their work accordingly.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving. Teachers use a wide range of techniques to support pupils' learning. We saw skilful use of the interactive whiteboards, good questioning and the use of number tools to aid learning in mathematics. The introduction of such techniques is a direct response to the need to improve mathematics teaching. This is strong evidence of your ambition to get things right for the pupils. It is also evidence that the robust plans for improving the school, since the inspection, are making a difference. We agreed, however, that teachers would add value to their already effective lessons by working through examples for the class of each calculation.

Teachers use humour well to capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm. The vast majority of pupils were enjoying their learning. Many told me informally that they like coming to school and that it is fun in class. Pupils explained to me that in every

lesson they have something that they are expected to be able to do. This helps them focus on what they are learning. All pupils like this. They also like the system for managing their behaviour. This is applied consistently across the school. As a result, behaviour in lessons is good.

It is encouraging that the new teachers' performance management arrangements are based around targets relating to pupils' progress. This can be strengthened further and even more sharply related to teachers' pay progression. This will help you gather convincing evidence of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and strengthen your evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness.

The review of governance, recommended at the inspection, was undertaken professionally and appropriately. The report on its findings shows that governors understand their roles and responsibilities in a manner consistent with modern governance. It also shows that considerable time was given to the exercise after the inspection. The report provides evidence that no time was lost in making these necessary improvements. Work was underway almost immediately to strengthen governance. The review process was conducted with rigour. Governors were held to account for their contribution to the progress of the school.

Current governance structures and processes seem to be effective. Governors are certainly asking leaders now to account for their actions and the performance of the school. Notes of governors' visits are detailed and helpful. They give an account of each governor's activity during the visit, but also provide a written evaluation of the particular aspect of the school's work that was in focus. Governors recognise the need to ensure that the website is compliant with the Secretary of State's requirements, ahead of the next full inspection.

External support

The local authority was already working with leaders, having itself judged the school to require improvement in some aspects of its performance. This support continued after the inspection, though there has been a change in personnel. The local authority has also brokered effective support from a local leader of education, located at a school close by. You told me how much you appreciate this professional dialogue. The governors commissioned a review of their work, as recommended by the inspection team. This was carried out rigorously by an experienced consultant and has already had a positive impact on the governors' voluntary work. Advisers have a realistic and accurate view of the school's current performance and are working with you productively to ensure that the school is judged to be at least good at the next inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Dr Simon Hughes
Her Majesty's Inspector