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Miss Patricia Briggs
Principal
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Dear Miss Briggs

Short inspection of Brockworth Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 9 January 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 April 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

As executive principal, you share your time across two schools. You, along with the trust, are building additional capacity in the other tiers of leadership in this school. This work is beginning to pay off. There is, for example, increasing impact of subject leaders to improve pupils' achievement overall.

You are working determinedly and have a good knowledge of strengths and weaknesses in the school. Leaders' actions have brought about an improvement in pupils' achievement in reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar at the end of key stage 2, so that it is in line with the national average. While a marked improvement on the previous year, similar improvement is not yet replicated in pupils' attainment in writing or mathematics. Too few current pupils have the skills and knowledge expected for their age. You recognise that there is too much inconsistency in teaching and in the progress of middle-attaining pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

Large proportions of children start the school with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development, the standard expected at the end of the Reception Year, is improving gradually. However, this remains considerably below the national average. Pupils'

language development is too limited. At the end of key stage 1, pupils' outcomes were below the national average in 2016 and have declined further in 2017.

You have identified that strengthening communication with parents and carers is a high priority. Although many parents would recommend the school to another parent, a number raised concerns about the impact of teaching, leadership and support their children receive. A few parents also raised concerns about the number of changes to leadership and about levels of communication in the school.

Since September 2017, the structure and lines of accountabilities of the governing body have changed. In recent weeks, adjustments to the way the chair of governors and his team work are enabling a more precise focus on remedying the remaining weaknesses in the school's performance. However, the trust and school leadership, including the local governing board, recognise that this work is very recent. It is too early to see strong impact of their work.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders conduct checks on school safeguarding systems. For example, they have responded to actions from a recent safeguarding audit. Staff training is up to date and in line with current legislation. Staff spoken to on inspection apply their training confidently so that risks of harm to pupils are minimised. Leaders make timely referrals and work in partnership with external support to minimise pupils' risk of harm. Staff have been trained in the 'Prevent' duty and in relation to child exploitation, and talk confidently about how to refer concerns should they consider a child to be at risk.

Staff vetting checks meet requirements, and the single central record is up to date. However, in the past, governors have not checked the single central record for its accuracy. This is now resolved. Statutory requirements are met.

Inspection findings

- I examined the progress that pupils with previously low and middle attainment make in writing and mathematics across key stage 1 and lower key stage 2. This is because a large proportion of pupils start key stage 1 with skills and knowledge lower than expected for their age. In the past, some of these pupils have not caught up quickly enough.
- Low-attaining pupils' letter and number formation is improving in Year 1. These pupils are increasingly able to write simple sentences and add some detail to their writing. Pupils are encouraged to use their phonic knowledge to spell unknown words successfully. Work in books shows that middle-attaining pupils are writing at greater length. However, where pupils' use of punctuation is too inconsistent it is not routinely picked up. In Year 2, some pupils are catching up well, while others do not write with the accuracy and detail that is expected for their age. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not yet consistently high enough. As a result, pupils' progress remains too variable overall.

- Teaching now ensures that pupils can talk about their mathematical understanding and clarify their thinking. When activities planned are closely matched to pupils' needs, they make good progress. However, in some classes, pupils' errors or misconceptions are not followed up consistently. As a result, some low- and middle-attaining pupils in key stage 1 do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Those pupils who did not meet the expected standards in early years and who are now in Years 3 and 4 are beginning to catch up. However, their progress is not swift enough. The school's performance information and work in books demonstrate that a large number of pupils are not yet progressing at the rates required to meet expected standards.
- You know that there is more to do to secure full accuracy of assessment. The progress of middle-attaining pupils across the school is too inconsistent in writing. Work in books and the school's systems for recording information from pupils' performance are not yet aligned fully.
- The inspection also focused on pupils' attendance, including that of those pupils who are eligible for additional funding. This is because some disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities have not attended well enough in the past. As a result of leaders' considerable intervention, including external agency support, pupils' attendance is improving gradually so that it is broadly in line with the national average this year. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is reducing gradually, but remains too high. This has an impact on the progress that these pupils make.
- Another aspect I examined was the impact of leaders' actions to ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are accurately identified and make good progress. You have formalised systems to track pupils eligible for this additional funding. The register having been audited, pupils who do not meet the criteria have been removed from it. Pupils who were previously identified due to their slower than average progress, or to prior underachievement, are now receiving targeted teaching to catch up. Pupils who remain on the SEN register have learning targets and specific interventions to support learning. Some pupils are making rapid progress this year. However, in some cases, the provision that pupils receive is too inconsistent. This is because leaders do not have full oversight of the learning on offer in classes. Leaders do not check pupils' workbooks regularly enough. As a result, leaders are unaware of when these pupils cannot access their learning or resources fail to meet pupils' needs. Consequently, for some pupils, progress falters.
- Finally, I examined the impact of leadership systems and teachers' assessments intended to ensure that learning builds on what pupils know, can do and understand. This is because previously published pupils' performance information shows that pupils' progress has not been consistently good in the recent past.
- Currently, the school is changing from one assessment tracking system to another. Teachers' assessments are recorded on one system while leaders and governors share information from another system to account for pupils' progress at trust level. There is discrepancy between the two systems. Teachers' assessment is not as accurate as it could be. You and other leaders have not

picked up this discrepancy quickly enough.

- Leaders check pupils' learning through book scrutiny. This enables middle and senior leaders to confirm whether staff training and agreed teaching strategies are applied consistently across the school. However, such checks do not pick up whether pupils' progress is secure from their different starting points. As a result, some pupils slip through the net and do not make the progress of which they are capable in reading, writing and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they ensure that inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are eradicated, so that a greater proportion of low-attaining and middle-attaining pupils catch up and meet and exceed the standards that are expected for their age in key stages 1 and 2 in writing and mathematics
- teachers' expectations of pupils are consistently high and they use their assessments accurately to plan work that is closely matched to pupils' needs
- governors hold senior and middle leaders to account for ensuring that checks on teaching and learning take account of pupils' starting points so that pupils' progress can be evaluated accurately, including that of pupils' who have SEN and/or disabilities
- governors and the trust hold leaders to account robustly to ensure that the accuracy of assessment across the school is improved and a consistent system is used to track pupils' performance
- they reduce persistent absence in the school, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Gloucestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Carrington
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke with you, other school leaders and a group of governors. I also held a telephone conversation with the primary director of the trust. We made visits to lessons to observe pupils' learning and to scrutinise their work. I conducted a joint book scrutiny with a senior leader. I also talked to pupils

in lessons and listened to their views of the school.

I considered a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation, development plans and school performance information. I also looked at monitoring records for teaching, learning and assessment, your analysis of pupils' attendance and behaviour and safeguarding documentation.

In addition, I took account of 23 responses to the Parent View online survey and the free-text messaging service. I gathered the views of staff through an online questionnaire and through discussions during the inspection.