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Mrs Vicky Corbett
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Corbett

Short inspection of Broad Square Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 November 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 January 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Since your appointment as headteacher in September 2018, you have implemented many changes to move the school forward.

Governors support you well in your endeavours. They are familiar with school priorities and are increasingly challenging senior leaders. Governors come into school regularly. They meet with subject leaders and those responsible for safeguarding, participate in celebration events and talk to pupils about their learning. Governors do not have an in-depth understanding of how well different groups of pupils are performing.

You have forged a strong partnership with other leaders, including the deputy headteacher, the designated leader for safeguarding and the leader of early years. Together you form a formidable team. The school improvement plans you have in place are precise. Your evaluation of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to further improve is accurate. Teachers and teaching assistants are familiar with your plans and have been fully involved in putting them into action. This helps to ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are good.

The school is situated in the heart of a well-established community. Many parents and carers, and some grandparents, attended the school. You have quickly secured the trust and confidence of parents, as demonstrated in the views expressed in text messages and in the comments made by parents who spoke with me. All those who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, would recommend the

school. Parents are of the view that their children are happy, safe and making good progress. They are especially complimentary about the daily presence of senior leaders at the school gates and the many opportunities available for them to learn alongside their children and participate in the life of the school. Typically, parents commented: 'All staff are friendly and approachable,' 'Broad Square really stands out, my children love it,' and 'Recently there has been lots of changes, all of them good.'

Broad Square is a stimulating and exciting place where pupils are eager to learn. This is because of the strong bond between teachers and pupils. Teachers share their enthusiasm and capture pupils' interest. The pupils I met were eager to tell me about their learning. Year 3 pupils could barely contain their excitement as they recalled a recent visit from an archaeologist and their opportunity to see and handle a woolly mammoth's tusk. Pupils' behaviour, particularly in class, is impeccable. They are welcoming, courteous and polite.

Staff morale is exceptionally high. All staff who completed the inspection questionnaire, and those who I spoke with, were very positive about all aspects of teaching and learning. Broad Square leaders are forward thinking and always looking to broaden pupils' horizons. Consequently, staff are active within various local school clusters. They have learned considerably from visiting specialist teachers, and you provide a comprehensive programme of continuous professional development and training. You are eager to develop the skills of staff and have high expectations of them. Teachers told me that you manage to do this while ensuring that all staff maintain a sensible work-life balance.

Most areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been resolved. Most notably, you have forged an exceptionally strong team of subject specialists who are well trained, knowledgeable and enthusiastic. As a result, the quality of teaching has been enhanced and is continuing to improve. In addition, most pupils' ability to apply their mathematical understanding to practical problem-solving activities has improved. You have ensured that the subject leader for mathematics is trained well. He works closely with staff to ensure that mathematics teaching is consistently good. In addition, your reorganisation of classes and the high expectations that teachers have of pupils are reaping rewards. However, there is more work to be done to ensure that the most able pupils develop a deeper understanding of mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

- Senior leaders ensure that policies and procedures relating to safeguarding pupils are current and thorough. The deputy headteacher is one of three designated safeguarding leaders. She has an excellent understanding of safeguarding principles and the complete confidence of parents, staff, pupils and governors. Checks on staff records are rigorous and up to date. Records show that all staff are suitable to work with pupils, including the children in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The safeguarding policy is current and available on the school's website. It refers

to the very latest guidelines on keeping children safe. All staff sign to indicate that they have read the school's policies and government guidelines, including part 1 of the guidance 'Keeping children safe in education, September 2018' issued by the Secretary of State.

- All staff have had 'Prevent' duty training, which is in keeping with the government's agenda to counter terrorism and radicalisation. Safeguarding training is also available for parents. In addition, staff and governors benefit from training in various areas including safer recruitment and working with vulnerable children.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Those I spoke with demonstrated a good understanding of internet safety and stranger danger. They say that staff, including the school mentor, help to keep them safe. They also express great confidence that any worries reported will be quickly resolved. Pupils say that there is no bullying and that behaviour is almost always good.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on several key lines of enquiry, the first of which was the role of subject leaders in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Subject leaders are playing a much more prominent role in monitoring pupils' progress and evaluating the quality of teaching in their respective subject areas. The mentoring offered by you and senior leaders and the support from School Improvement Liverpool are effective and much appreciated by leaders. It has given them confidence and raised their authority when observing their colleagues teaching, assessing the quality of work in pupils' books and talking to pupils about their learning.
- As leaders explained to me, 'We take a collaborative approach to teaching and sharing what works.' Targeted training and support have helped to hone leaders' skills in many subject areas. For example, design and technology training has helped to develop teachers' skills and enlivened the curriculum. Leaders' focus on reading has enhanced pupils' appreciation of the work of an increasingly wide range of authors. Specialist training has also helped teachers to deepen and improve pupils' mastery and fluency in mathematics. However, there is more to do to ensure that teaching consistently helps the most able pupils to develop a deeper understanding of mathematical principles.
- My second line of enquiry related to pupils' writing, and specifically to pupils' ability to write at length and opportunities provided for them to refine their skills in subjects other than English. You have ensured that teachers make writing interesting and relevant. Pupils' writing shows an ability to be imaginative and empathise with others. In Year 6, pupils captured the misery of the Second World War and the destructive impact it had on families. Their recent visit to St Luke's (the 'bombed church' in Liverpool), and a visit from two women who experienced the Blitz, undoubtedly contributed to pupils' detailed and thoughtful writing.
- You have also improved writing by ensuring that teachers promote pupils' writing skills in a wide range of subjects. For example, Year 3 pupils' topic books contain good factual writing about their visit to a Mesolithic burial ground in Anglesey.

Opportunities to write for different purposes are also available. During the inspection pupils were engaged in various cross-curricular activities relating to design and technology week. This led to examples of writing instructions linked to the operation of mechanical objects. As a result of your focus on improving writing and providing many opportunities for pupils to develop their skills across the curriculum, pupils' writing has improved.

- My next line of enquiry focused on the performance of Year 6 pupils. This was because for three consecutive years pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was good, especially for disadvantaged pupils. Attainment was steadily improving, particularly in mathematics. However, standards dipped in all subjects, except grammar, punctuation and spelling, in 2018. You have compelling evidence that this cohort contained a large proportion of pupils who had special educational needs and/or disabilities. While these pupils made good progress, their attainment was below average.
- Current pupils, including those in Year 6, make good progress in a wide range of subjects. Teachers' secure understanding of data enables them to put interventions in place quickly when pupils are not achieving as well as they should. All governors are aware of overall trends in pupils' performance. However, some governors do not have a precise understanding of the relative performance of different groups of pupils.
- My final line of enquiry related to the performance of children in the early years. I wanted to find out whether the performance of children eligible for additional funding was improving. This is because after three years of improvement overall, which saw attainment at the end of the Reception Year edging ever closer to the national average, the performance of this group of children dipped in 2017.
- Evidence in data and children's work shows children in both the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress. Staff and senior leaders' focus on improving children's language and communication skills, as well as their personal and social development, is paying off. The recent school offer of full-time places for children in the Nursery class has been taken up by almost all parents, the positive impact of which is evident in children's growing confidence and eagerness to learn. Records of their progress are presented with great care and attention, charting children's progress in various areas of learning. The training offered to staff is exemplary, ensuring that they form a highly skilled, effective and professional team.
- Unvalidated data in 2018 indicates that the proportion of children attaining a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has risen again this year. This represents sustained progress, given the weak skills of many children on entry to the Nursery class. The performance of children eligible for additional funding is strong and in line with other children nationally.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers consistently provide opportunities for the most able pupils to develop a deeper understanding of mathematical principles
- all governors have a precise understanding of the progress of different groups of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Lenford White
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher. I also met with other members of the senior leadership team and subject leaders. We visited classes across the school. I met with a representative from the local authority and had a discussion with a random sample of pupils. I examined various documents, including action plans for English and mathematics and for the use of pupil premium funding, alongside data on pupils' performance. I also scrutinised a sample of pupils' work and looked at a wide range of policies, including those for behaviour, safeguarding and the curriculum.

I took account of parents' views at the start of the school day. I also considered 13 free-text messages and 25 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I looked at 180 responses to the pupil survey and 32 responses to the staff questionnaire.