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25 June 2019

Mrs Julie Thomas
Headteacher
Brougham Primary School
Brougham Terrace
Hartlepool
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Dear Mrs Thomas

Short inspection of Brougham Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 June 2019, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

You provide determined and well-focused leadership which ensures that pupils' personal development and academic progress are strong. Your approach to developing other leaders in school has a positive effect on improving leadership capacity. Along with your leaders, governors and the chief executive officer (CEO) of Ad Astra Academy Trust, you have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Consequently, leaders' self-evaluation is accurate, and their plans are successfully addressing the school's areas for development. Support from the trust has been well targeted and used effectively by school leaders. The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

The strengths identified in pupils' behaviour found at the previous inspection have been maintained. Around school, pupils conduct themselves in a calm, orderly manner. When we visited lessons together, I found there to be a positive learning atmosphere in which pupils work diligently and cooperate well. The relationships between staff and pupils, and pupils and their peers demonstrate mutual respect. Your work to improve pupils' attendance is beginning to bear fruit and the proportions of pupils with a high a level of absence is now reducing. However, the overall level of attendance still lags behind the national average and there is more to do to improve this. You, your staff, governors and trust leaders remain focused on driving this improvement forward.

Leaders have largely addressed the areas for improvement found at the previous inspection of your school. Work to improve the quality of teaching of mathematics and pupils' outcomes is having a beneficial effect. The subject leader for

mathematics has implemented actions effectively to develop the mathematics curriculum and has provided relevant training for staff. Pupils now complete regular number practice designed to improve their command and fluency of this mathematical knowledge. Your current pupil attainment information and the sample of books we considered show that this work is contributing to an increase in the proportion of pupils who are working at the expected standard. The proportion of pupils working at the higher standard is not improving as consistently across the school and is still an aspect for further development.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, staff, governors and the trust give the highest priority to keeping pupils safe and there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders complete appropriate safeguarding checks for all staff, trustees, governors and volunteers to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Regular audits of the school's record of checks, known as the single central record, are completed by leaders, trustees and the trust's human resources leader.

Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training. As a result, they know and follow the school's procedures to keep pupils safe. All staff contribute effectively to the school's online recording system. The school's safeguarding team, which includes a range of school leaders, meets regularly to carefully check the provision for any pupils who may be vulnerable. The school works very effectively with a range of agencies to secure the necessary support for pupils and their families where needed. Responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, show that all parents and carers who responded believe that their children feel happy and safe at the school.

Inspection findings

- You and your staff are outward looking and draw on research and networks both within the trust and beyond. This enables you to find effective practice relevant to your school priorities and to tailor this to meet the needs of your pupils.
- The subject leader for English has a detailed understanding of the priorities for improving reading. A more systematic and regular approach to teaching reading is in place. This strategy focuses on improving pupils' motivation to read, developing their comprehension skills and enriching their vocabulary knowledge. Evidence in pupils' books and in the school's pupil progress information shows that this is having a positive effect. However, the proportion of current pupils who are working at the higher standard for their age range remains an area for further improvement.
- Overall, pupils' reading books are well matched to their abilities. The pupils that I listened to read competently for their age and were interested in reading. However, our review of pupils' home-reading books indicated that sometimes these books do not fully match the pupils' phonics knowledge. Also, the school's approach to monitoring pupils' reading at home makes it difficult to know how

well pupils practise their reading beyond school.

- Phonics teaching is systematic, structured and well matched to pupils' needs. Staff complete detailed assessments of pupils' phonics knowledge. As a result, by the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check is above the national average.
- Leaders have recently revised the school's behaviour policy. This has had a positive effect and pupils could explain clearly to me the school's approaches to behaviour management. Across this academic year, this has also substantially reduced the numbers of pupil exclusions from school.
- Discussions with pupils and the pupil survey show that pupils know what bullying means. While pupils say that it sometimes happens in school, they believe that staff are good at resolving this. The vast majority who responded to the pupil survey believe that there is an adult in school to talk to if there is something worrying them. The school has a counsellor to help any pupils who need additional emotional or social support.
- You and your staff have focused on improving attendance and reducing the numbers of pupils whose absence levels are too high. You have also worked on improving pupils' punctuality. This has had a positive effect on reducing lateness and persistent absence levels. However, overall attendance remains below that of schools in similar contexts. Improving attendance further is still a priority in your improvement plans and pupil premium strategy.
- The early years leader, subject leaders for English and mathematics and the trust's head of school improvement have reviewed parts of the early years curriculum, including the provision for two-year-olds. This is beginning to create a curriculum which better meets the needs of early years and two-year-old children. You have plans in place to continue this curriculum review. This will be beneficial as, while children are making strong progress in early years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception is below the national average.
- The CEO of the trust has a firm grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. He has ensured that the school has received appropriate challenge and, where needed, support with the school's priorities. Leaders have used this assistance effectively to contribute to improvements in early years, reading and attendance.
- Governors understand their roles, as set out in the trust's scheme of delegation. They regularly visit school to find out how effectively improvement initiatives are working. Leaders, including middle leaders, report to the governing body to ensure that governors are well informed. Consequently, governors provide suitable support and challenge to ensure the school's improvement plans are on track.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- developments in the mathematics and reading curriculums are embedded, and the proportions of pupils who are working at the higher standards in these subjects increase further
- opportunities for pupils to practise reading at home are reviewed, including considering approaches for parental engagement and the match of pupils' home-reading books to their phonics knowledge
- the development of the curriculum in early years, including for two-year-olds, continues, so that over time the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception improves to the national average or beyond
- the focus on improving attendance is maintained and that the school's overall level of attendance at least matches the average of schools in similar contexts.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, 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 Hartlepool Borough. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Reeves
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders for English and mathematics and the early years leader. My meeting with three members of the local governing body provided me with additional information. I held a telephone conversation with the CEO of Ad Astra Academy Trust to determine the support and challenge provided by the trust. I observed and spoke with pupils throughout the day.

I considered school documentation, policies and information posted on the school website. I considered the 11 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I reviewed the 19 responses to the staff survey and the 23 responses to the pupil survey. Alongside you, I visited lessons to observe the teaching of phonics and reading and the provision for two-year-olds. I listened to pupils read within lessons and individually. We also looked at a sample of pupils' reading and mathematics exercise books. I considered information relating to safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, exclusions and bullying.