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Inez Morse  
Executive Headteacher  
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Dear Inez Morse

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

Following my visit to your school on 8 October 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

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

The school should take further action to:

- continue to develop the school's curriculum to ensure that it is coherently planned and sequenced so that pupils are able to know more and remember more as they progress through the school
- ensure that the recent improvements in the teaching of phonics are sustained so that there is a clear focus on ensuring that younger pupils promptly gain the phonics knowledge necessary to read well
- maintain a sharp focus on continuing to improve teachers' subject knowledge to

enhance the teaching of the curriculum.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you, the head of school, the English and mathematics subject leaders, members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Together we visited all three classrooms to observe learning, talk to pupils in lessons and review work in pupils' workbooks. I observed some pupils reading to an adult. I spoke with some parents at the start of the day. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school development plan, minutes of governor meetings and records of external moderation of the school's performance. I examined the school's single central record of background checks on adults working in the school.

## **Context**

Several changes have occurred since the section 5 inspection. The head of school joined the school in September 2018. Since July 2019, the local authority has been carrying out a consultation about the proposed closure of the school at the end of the academic year. Twenty pupils have left the school since the start of the consultation, in addition to the 13 pupils who left routinely at the end of Year 6. The number of classes in the school has reduced from four to three. There have also been some changes to the governing body, which continues to work across the three schools of the Woodlands Federation, with a new chair of governors joining in April 2019. More governors have also been appointed, so there are now 15 governors in total.

## **Main findings**

Ably supported by the head of school, you are effectively making the required improvements. Subject leaders and governors share your ambitious determination to improve the school. Parents are pleased with the sense of urgency towards this work, particularly since the head of school took up her post last year. Parents spoken to during the inspection described their children as 'happy and thriving' at the school.

Leaders and governors know the school well. Plans for improvement are appropriate and identify helpful milestone targets throughout the year to achieve success. Leaders know that describing the improvements they are making to the curriculum with even greater precision will help to hasten developments in this area further.

You are skilfully drawing on expertise from within the Woodlands Federation and from the local authority to strengthen the leadership of English and mathematics. Subject leaders can explain clearly what their priorities are. They are helpfully

supported by senior leaders to evaluate learning in their subject areas. In mathematics, leaders know exactly what pupils need to know and be able to do by the end of key stage 1 to be well prepared for learning in key stage 2. However, this is not yet so well understood in English, where teachers' subject knowledge is still developing. Furthermore, subject leaders acknowledge that their curriculum plans do not yet consistently describe in enough detail the precise order for the teaching of knowledge and skills in their subject areas across the school.

During my visits to classrooms, the atmosphere was calm, and pupils were enjoying their learning activities. Staff are using the same helpful teaching strategies across the school. Support staff are being well-trained to work effectively to support pupils' learning. They understand what the focus for the lesson is and are asking pupils useful and probing questions to deepen their learning. In English, support staff are rightly promoting pupils' use of ambitious vocabulary in their writing because they know this is a priority for the school. Pupils' work shows that they are relishing using more interesting words in their writing. For example, a pupil imaginatively described 'a princess stuck in a colossal glass bottle'.

Leaders are successfully prioritising reading. Staff are working well together to promote pupils' love of reading. Every classroom now includes an inviting reading area. The library has been overhauled and is stocked with a wide range of enticing fiction and non-fiction books. Some pupils are keenly acting as librarians and sharing story sessions with younger pupils at lunchtime.

The teaching of phonics is improving. Staff have received useful training. Pleasingly, the published provisional results for the Year 1 phonics screening check were better last year than in the past. Pupils are reading regularly to an adult, and most books are matched appropriately to pupils' phonics ability. Pupils confidently use their phonics skills to blend sounds together and notice phonics patterns they have been taught. However, support for reading with younger pupils is not always focused sharply enough on encouraging them to use phonics strategies when they come across unknown words in their reading books.

The teaching of mathematics is improving across the school. Pupils now have regular opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to solve challenging problems. Work seen in pupils' books shows many examples of pupils explaining their reasoning. Teachers are using assessment well to plan pupils' learning carefully so that they gradually improve their mathematical knowledge and skills.

The quality of pupils' writing is getting better. Most of the time, the purpose of this teaching in this subject is specific and builds coherently on pupils' earlier learning. Writing is being effectively linked to pupils' reading by focusing on quality texts, such as 'Street Child', for example, to inspire their written work. The quality of pupils' presentation of their work indicates teachers' increasingly high expectations. Teachers are checking pupils' understanding during lessons and swiftly clarifying misconceptions. Improvements are sensibly being made to the teaching of spelling,

punctuation and grammar this year, following a disappointing dip in standards last year. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this work yet.

### **External support**

The local authority is providing effective support and challenge to leaders and governors to improve the school. Advisers from East Sussex local authority are offering timely, focused support and guidance in all aspects of the school's work. Staff training, together with the school's involvement in specific local authority led projects, is helping to improve the quality of education in the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for East Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Claire Prince

**Her Majesty's Inspector**