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Mrs Vicki Lonie
Headteacher
Broadwater Down Primary School
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Dear Mrs Lonie

Short inspection of Broadwater Down Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 November 2017, 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders and governors know the school well and share a desire that it will have a positive impact on pupils' lives. You strive to create an inclusive educational environment that will enable all pupils to achieve equally well, regardless of their backgrounds or starting points. Since your appointment, you have managed staff turbulence well and provided stability for the school. You are also well supported by the highly skilled governing body. As a result, you and your team have been able to focus on raising pupils' achievement.

Pupils are confident and love learning new things. They appreciate the range of opportunities to engage with the wider curriculum. They said that learning is fun and the school provides them with experiences that they would not normally have. Pupils are inspired by their teachers and respond with enthusiasm. Parents and pupils commented on the inclusive nature of the school and the sense of being part of a family. One parent said, 'Every child has a chance to shine.' Another remarked that there is a real sense of community, and she is impressed by the understanding her child has of children's different cultural backgrounds.

Since the last inspection, leaders have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching and raise attainment. You make effective use of training opportunities and advice through collaboration with other primary schools. You have high expectations of your staff and provide them with the training and support they need to enable pupils to have a good education. While many improvements have been

made, you acknowledge that there is still some work to be done to ensure that there is consistency across the school. This is because, on occasion, some teachers do not have high enough expectations and the school's agreed approaches to reading and writing are not yet consistently established. You have worked effectively with the local authority and external agencies to improve outcomes and pupils' attendance. As a result, pupils are attending more regularly and they are making better progress. However, you recognise that leaders will need to continue their focus on this aspect of the school's work.

Safeguarding is effective.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All statutory checks are carried out robustly, and safe recruitment procedures are in place. Safeguarding training is thorough and up to date.

You and your staff know the needs and vulnerabilities of individual pupils very well. Staff do everything they can to keep pupils safe. Safeguarding at the school is reflective of the inclusive environment that leaders have created. Pupils learn how to stay safe through a wide range of curriculum opportunities, including e-safety lessons, 'forest school' and special events.

Pupils are confident that the school is a safe place. They play a part in ensuring that all pupils are safe through their work with the school council and leadership of e-safety. They recognise the difficulties experienced by some vulnerable pupils but can describe the ways adults support these pupils so that the school is a safe place for everyone. They describe the care and friendship which exist both between pupils and with adults.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including: the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; pupils' attendance; the ways in which pupils learn and apply phonics to tackle new words and improve their spelling; and the opportunities that pupils have to work at greater depth in reading and writing.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. The school has a range of strategies in place to promote good attendance. Leaders use certificates, competitions and mascot awards to encourage regular attendance and reward pupils who attend well.
- You also have effective systems in place to identify poor attenders and reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent. You and your team work sensitively with families to understand their individual circumstances, for example where a pupil has particular medical or special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities that affect their attendance. This ensures that staff adapt the support and challenge they provide to reflect the situation of each pupil. While attendance is improving slowly, and pupils who continue to be persistently absent are well supported, you are right to continue your focus on this.

- Historically, pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check had been below the expected standard. Pupils did not use their knowledge of phonics to help them tackle new words when reading or to spell words accurately. Leaders have used external reviews and advice successfully to improve phonics teaching.
- Visits to classes, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of work in pupils' books show that pupils have acquired phonics skills and are able to correct their own spelling. Developments in teaching are leading to improved progress in reading and writing, particularly for older pupils. Teachers and highly skilled teaching assistants have worked together effectively, to increase pupils' phonics knowledge. As a result, pupils of all abilities are gaining confidence in reading, writing and spelling.
- Leaders have introduced a number of new strategies to improve pupils' outcomes in writing. These include focusing on the characteristics of good writing, pupils' self-editing to improve their work and the opportunity for pupils to evaluate each other's work. Leaders have also worked effectively with parents so that pupils are supported by practising and developing their skills at home. Teachers make better use of assessments to provide early support for those pupils at risk of underachieving. Despite this, there are still times when the school's agreed strategies are not used consistently. When this happens, pupils do not learn as well as they could.
- In 2017, not enough pupils in the Year 6 cohort worked at greater depth in English. Leaders have examined the reasons for this and made changes to the school's approach to teaching English. Teachers' improved subject knowledge enables them to provide a wider range of experiences to promote greater depth in both reading and writing. The most able pupils can write fluently, accurately and for different purposes. They take great pride in their written work in all subjects and seek to continuously improve. Older pupils described the ways in which they were able to link their work on 'Macbeth' to their study of the Tudors. This study included the establishment of the Church of England, Tudor portraits, learning Tudor dances and various writing tasks for a range of purposes.
- There has been a sharper focus on reading, and pupils now have books to read which interest them, but which also provide greater challenge. Leaders' analysis showed that pupils were not as confident as they needed to be when working on comprehension tasks in greater depth. Pupils now have more opportunities to develop their inference and deduction skills, making use of evidence from texts. Where teachers develop these comprehension strategies effectively, pupils achieve well. However, expectations in key stage 1 are not always high enough and, as a result, teachers occasionally do not move pupils' learning forward as quickly as they could.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teachers maintain high expectations of what every pupil can achieve

- teachers use the school's agreed teaching strategies more consistently to accelerate pupils' progress in reading and writing
- leaders continue their good work to improve pupils' attendance.

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

Yours sincerely

Ann McCarthy
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Together with you, I observed learning across the whole school. We discussed your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I met with the school's leaders, three governors, including the chair, and a representative of the local authority. I spoke to pupils, listened to pupils read and examined work in their books. I considered 16 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 28 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Parent View. I also considered parents' views from the 19 free-text comments. I analysed a range of the school's documentation including: information about pupils' achievement and attendance; the school improvement plan; evidence of monitoring visits; and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures.