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Mrs H Atkinson-Smith
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Atkinson-Smith

Short inspection of Burnley Brow Community School

Following my visit to the school on 15 May 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and the deputy headteacher work very well together. Your different skills and personalities complement each other well. Your evaluation of the school is honest and self-reflective. As a result, the school continues to improve. You know the strengths and areas which need to be developed further to provide the highest quality of education for pupils.

Burnley Brow Community School is a calm school. Learning is focused and purposeful in classrooms. The school is a harmonious and inclusive community. The classrooms are bright, welcoming and stimulating. Across the school, there are many examples of pupils' learning celebrated in attractive wall displays.

Governors are experienced, have a wide set of skills and know the school well. They regularly visit the school, participate in events and are involved in monitoring the school's improvement priorities. Consequently, they have a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development, and provide relevant challenge and support.

The school is highly regarded by parents and carers. Leaders have left no stone unturned in getting to know, and providing for, the needs of the local community. There are many opportunities for parents to improve their skills and be fully

involved in their children's learning. Parents value the wide range of activities you provide for them, for example healthy cookery classes, English classes and visits to the local seaside. They also spoke with pride about the relationships they have with staff and how they are always welcome in school. This is a key strength of the school.

Other considerable strengths of the school are pupils' positive attitudes and their very good behaviour. They are polite, well mannered and a credit to their families. Across the school, it was evident that pupils want to learn and they value the opportunities they have. They enjoy coming to school and are proud to be part of the school community. As a result, attendance is above the national average.

You have responded effectively to most of the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. Leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise pupils' achievement. This has been most successful in key stage 2, where pupils make rapid progress, especially in mathematics. As a result of your actions in 2017, the progress Year 6 pupils made through key stage 2 was in the top third of schools nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

Assessment systems are robust and are used effectively to inform planning and provide swift support for any pupils who may be falling behind in their learning. Pupils receive relevant feedback and time is allocated so that they can quickly address misconceptions in their learning. Current school assessment information and the work in pupils' books show that pupils are making good progress and achievement is rising, including at the higher standard in reading and mathematics. However, although overall, pupils' progress is good, you agreed that the progress of the most able needs to accelerate further so that a greater proportion achieve at the higher standard in writing across the school and in reading in key stage 2.

Inspectors also asked leaders to strengthen leadership at all levels by using pupils' achievement to set targets for improvement which are clear and easily measured. You have tackled this area admirably and have established a knowledgeable and skilled leadership team who are leading improvements in their areas of responsibility. They are eager to take on additional responsibilities because they value the trust and support that they receive. Leaders at all levels use pupils' achievement to set relevant targets to maximise pupils' progress.

Safeguarding is effective

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and at the core of the school's ethos. Records are detailed and of high quality. Staff and governors receive a wide range of effective training and, as a result, they are clear about what to do if they have concerns about pupils' safety or well-being. The single central record and checks on the suitability of adults to work with pupils all meet statutory requirements.

Pupils know how to stay safe in a variety of situations. This is because of the effective support and teaching that they receive. Parents with whom I spoke were

all in agreement that their children are safe and happy. You know families exceptionally well and work effectively with external agencies to ensure that the most vulnerable families and pupils are kept safe.

Inspection findings

- This inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry. The first of these looked at how leaders are improving achievement in the early years. This is because the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development has been consistently below the national average. Children enter the school with skills below those typical for their age, and with limited experiences. The early years leader is knowledgeable and ensures that staff are well supported. Individualised assessments are completed when children start at the school, which highlight their strengths and next steps in learning. Teachers use this information to plan relevant learning activities. Consequently, children across the early years make good progress from their starting points.
- The indoor learning area is well resourced and provides exciting and skilfully planned opportunities for children to read, write and develop their mathematical understanding. Current school assessment information indicates that a greater proportion of children are now on track to achieve a good level of development. However, you have rightly identified that the outdoor learning area does not offer the same high-quality learning experiences. This hinders the rate of progress that some children make. We agreed that there need to be increased opportunities to broaden and deepen children's learning outdoors, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The second key line of enquiry considered the progress pupils are making in their phonics skills. Teachers and teaching assistants throughout the early years and key stage 1 ensure that there is a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. Teachers are knowledgeable and plan learning activities that meet pupils' individual needs. They check the progress that pupils make and bespoke support is provided for any pupils who begin to fall behind. Pupils read and write with confidence using their phonics skills. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 has risen over the last three years. Current school assessment information also shows that, across the early years and key stage 1, achievement in phonics is rising.
- The third key line of enquiry we looked at was how leaders are improving outcomes in key stage 1. This was because, over the last two years, the proportions of pupils who achieved at the expected and higher standard were below the national averages. You have identified this as an area for improvement and, as a result, have made many changes to improve teaching and learning in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders regularly evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. They use this information to ensure that teachers have access to targeted training. Consequently, teachers' subject knowledge is now strong. Teachers also regularly review pupils' progress and use this information to plan relevant learning activities and provide additional support when necessary.

- As a result of these changes, achievement improved in 2017 and current school assessment information shows that pupils are making even greater progress across key stage 1. Greater proportions of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are now on track to achieve at the expected and higher standards. This is now especially evident in reading and mathematics. Despite these improvements, you and the staff are not complacent. We agreed that, although the most able pupils make good progress in their writing, teachers need to provide more opportunities for them to develop their writing across the curriculum so that a greater proportion achieve at the higher standard.
- The last key line of enquiry considered the progress that the most able pupils make in reading and writing in key stage 2. This was because outcomes have been below the national average for two successive years at the higher standard. Leaders have acted swiftly and identified the barriers that were stopping the most able pupils from achieving. There have been improvements made to assessment systems which now ensure that all staff have a deep understanding of the progress these pupils make from their starting points. Teachers use this information to ensure that learning is appropriately challenging and interesting.
- As a result of the training the English leader has received, she has implemented many changes to improve the teaching of reading and writing across the school, especially for the most able. For example, pupils now find the core texts they read interesting, enjoyable and challenging. Leaders regularly monitor the teaching of reading and writing and provide teachers with targeted support to improve their teaching.
- While the most able pupils are making good progress across key stage 2, there is more evidence of the impact of leaders' actions on improving pupils' reading skills than on their writing skills. The improvements made to the teaching of reading, especially for the most able, are improving outcomes. However, you acknowledge that the new systems need embedding and adjusting so that more pupils achieve at the higher standard.
- There is scope for the most able key stage 2 pupils' writing to improve further. The work in pupils' books shows a lack of opportunities for the most able to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher standard across key stage 2 remains low. You recognise that writing for the most able pupils in key stage 2 needs to remain an area for further improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- children's learning outdoors in the early years is broadened and deepened, especially in reading, writing and mathematics
- the most able pupils develop their writing across the curriculum so that a greater proportion of pupils achieve at the higher standard

- the improvements made to the teaching of reading are further embedded and adjusted so that a greater proportion of pupils achieve at the higher standard in key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Barlow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I observed teaching and learning and scrutinised examples of pupils' work. I met with you, senior leaders, middle leaders and the school office manager. I met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke with a representative of the local authority. I spoke with six pupils in key stage 2 and with pupils informally in lessons and around the school. I also spoke with parents at the end of the day.

I evaluated the three free-text responses from parents. I also took account of eight responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and eight responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. I reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plans and assessment records, minutes of the governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. I also considered information posted on the school's website.