

1 March 2018

Mrs Georgina Winterburn  
Executive Headteacher  
Brownhill Primary Academy  
Torre Drive  
Leeds  
LS9 7DH

Dear Mrs Winterburn

### **Short inspection of Brownhill Primary Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 20 February 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 June 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders, including governors, have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development.

You, and the head of school, have created a highly inclusive learning environment in which all are valued. Your pupils, who between them speak 43 different languages in addition to English, feel warmly welcomed and secure at school.

While acknowledging that a very high proportion of pupils with no or very little English join the school mid-way through the academic year, you are determined that all pupils will be ready for secondary schooling by the end of Year 6. This steely determination inspires your staff and pupils. As a result, by the end of key stage 2, pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is in the top 10% of schools nationally. This highly creditable achievement addresses the area for improvement from the school's previous inspection well.

Leaders understand that reading unlocks the world of education and employment. Your pupils do not make as much progress in reading as they do in writing and mathematics. Consequently, the school's improvement plans outline clearly the actions that you and your staff will take to ensure that a greater proportion of pupils achieve the expected phonics standard in Year 1, and in reading at the end of key stages 1 and 2. The actions taken by the school recently are beginning to bear fruit.

You, together with the head of school, have worked with parents successfully to raise the profile of pupils' attendance at school. As a result, the proportion of pupils

who attend school every day is rising year on year. However, despite your efforts, pupils' attendance remains below the national average. Quite correctly, this is one of the school's key priorities for development.

Your pupils feel safe in school. They told me that they appreciate their teachers' kindness, care and support. Pupils are fully aware of the need to behave well, and work hard. They follow your lead and want to succeed.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff training is regular and of high quality. For example, all have recently completed training to help them to better understand issues affecting those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.

The designated safeguarding leaders work cooperatively with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families access appropriate help and support.

Pupils understand which repeated actions constitute bullying, including verbal, physical and cyber-bullying. They told me that it is unacceptable for the word 'gay' to be used pejoratively in school. Your pupils have noticed that behaviour is much improved in classrooms and at breaktimes. They understand that poor behaviour leads to lost learning. Pupils trust the adults in school to deal with any concerns that they may have.

Leaders have launched a number of initiatives to encourage regular attendance. For example, your pupils respond well to the rewards that are on offer for good attendance. They enjoy taking part in the school's termly incentive schemes such as the pop-up shop, fun day and food extravaganza.

You realise that parental buy-in to attendance is crucial and make sure that a member of the pastoral team meets with the parents of every pupil on admittance. A very high proportion of pupils have arrived into the country recently and some are completely new to schooling. Your staff make the necessity for regular attendance clear to parents from the beginning.

As a result of leaders' actions, whole-school attendance increased from 93.7% in the 2014/15 academic year to 95.2% in 2016/17. While pleased that more pupils are attending every day, leaders are unhappy that the school's attendance figures remain below the national average. Improving attendance is one of the school's key priorities.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leadership is strong at Brownhill Primary Academy. The systems and procedures to evaluate school improvement are seamless. Leaders outline the school's strengths and areas for development fully in the school's self-evaluation

document. The identified areas for development are priorities in the school improvement plan. You, together with the head of school, report formally to governors about each priority area on a termly basis. In addition, the chair of governors meets with you and the head of school monthly to check on progress more informally. As a result, governors' challenge and support for the work of the school are robust.

- Your decision to widen the leadership team to include the four assistant headteachers is paying dividends. They use their time and expertise well to improve the quality of teaching and learning in all key stages. The newly and recently qualified teachers appreciate the development opportunities provided by the assistant headteachers, for example the bespoke phonics support that they have accessed.
- Leaders, including governors, value the cooperative challenge from the trust and its education director. The trust director acknowledges that results 'could be higher' and has ensured that support from the trust is matched to the school's priorities closely. For example, a literacy consultant commissioned by the trust is supporting the development of reading throughout the school.
- In key stage 2, pupils make significantly above-average progress in writing and mathematics, and average progress in reading. The pupils who spend two full years in key stage 1 also make good progress to reach the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. A well-above-average proportion of these pupils exceed the standard expected for their age in writing and mathematics, and an average proportion exceed the standard in reading. Across the school, pupils' progress in reading is not as strong as their progress in writing and mathematics.
- In 2017, you were disappointed with the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 check and the Year 2 re-check of phonics. Leaders understand that phonics knowledge is the bedrock on which reading skills are built and are taking assertive action to improve the phonics provision further.
- In addition to a daily session, pupils who are identified by teachers as making slow progress in acquiring phonics knowledge and skills now access a number of additional, teacher-led phonics sessions throughout the week. These pupils' needs are being met well. Consequently, they are beginning to make more rapid progress.
- In addition, the early years and English leaders have ensured that all of the books that children in the Reception Year and pupils in key stage 1 are given to read are matched precisely to their knowledge of phonics. The reading scheme books, which are banded into phonics phases by colour, all contain a plethora of words that cover the sounds that the pupils have been taught. Pupils' confidence is beginning to grow because they are reading more fluently. The school's assessment information indicates that the pupils who are currently in Years 1 and 2 are making more rapid progress in phonics this year than they did last year, including those pupils with lower starting points.
- Leaders are pleased, but not satisfied, with the progress pupils make in mathematics from their starting points. A daily arithmetic session was introduced

across key stages 1 and 2 at the beginning of the current academic year. As a result, pupils' recall and use of basic number facts is improving. The subject leader for mathematics checks teachers' planning and pupils' books regularly to make sure all have plentiful opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge to reason and solve problems. Inspection evidence suggests that pupils' confidence in mathematics is growing too.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a greater proportion of pupils reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check and are better prepared to develop a love of, and expertise in, reading
- pupils make as much progress in reading as they do in writing and mathematics
- the proportion of pupils who attend school every day continues to increase.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the trust director of The Co-operative Academies Trust, the regional schools' commissioner and the director of children's services for Leeds. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Belita Scott  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I discussed the work of the school with you, the head of school and the middle leaders with responsibility for English, mathematics and the early years. In addition, I held a meeting with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also talked to the chair of the teaching and learning sub-committee by telephone. The trust director and an education director from The Co-operative Academies Trust discussed the school's work with me. I checked a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness and improvement plans. In addition, I examined information about pupils' attendance, behaviour and achievement. I talked to three parents by telephone, looked at the school's most recent survey of parental views and considered two parental free-text responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also took account of 14 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. Alongside you and your head of school, I visited classes to observe teaching, learning and assessment. Together with your middle leaders, I checked the progress made by pupils in their workbooks. I talked formally to a group of pupils from Years 2, 3, 4 and 6, and talked more informally to pupils in lessons about their learning. I read with children from the Reception Class and pupils in Years 1, 2, 3 and 6.