

10 January 2019

Mrs Andrea Sweeting
Headteacher
Brisbane Park Infant School
Blake Street
Barrow-in-Furness
Cumbria
LA14 1NY

Dear Mrs Sweeting

Short inspection of Brisbane Park Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 18 December 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment, you have created a strong team which is proud to work alongside you. You are well supported by senior leaders and you work well together. Staff and governors share your passion for learning and high expectations. These high aspirations are reflected in the school motto: 'Believe in yourself.'

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. 'My child skips to school each day and comes home with a big smile on his face,' typically reflects the views of many parents. Parents enjoy the many opportunities that they have to learn with their children, for example during weekly family learning sessions. Parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) appreciate the care and support that you and your staff give to the whole family. Parents are very proud of the school. The Christmas tombola event during the inspection was very well attended. Although pupils' attendance is improving and is broadly in line with the national figures, a small proportion of pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should.

Pupils are polite, confident and well mannered. The positive relationships fostered in the school contribute significantly to pupils' positive behaviour and love of learning. They enjoy the varied range of clubs and activities they can attend after school, for example craft club, construction club and dodgeball. They spoke excitedly about the recent trip to watch a play about Christmas. They particularly enjoy visits to St Paul's Wood to do group activities such as building dens, tracking footprints and

creating art work with natural materials. They have high aspirations for their future in sport, as police officers or looking after animals as a vet or a zoo keeper.

You and your staff have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and know what you need to do to improve further. Working together, you have designed a curriculum that effectively meets the social, emotional and academic needs of the pupils well. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Senior leaders ensure that staff have the knowledge and understanding they need to plan learning opportunities that ignite pupils' enthusiasm for learning. This is enabling pupils to achieve the standards of which they are capable, particularly in reading and writing. Staff feel they are supported well. They appreciate the opportunities to share ideas and expertise with colleagues in other schools, including the local junior school. In Reception, leaders liaise with a number of early years settings, including the local nursery school. You are beginning to bring about improvements to the learning environment for the youngest pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and securely kept. The school site is safe and secure. Staff check visitors' credentials and pupils know that anyone wearing a lanyard and visitors' badge has a right to be in the school. Training ensures that staff can identify any signs of neglect or abuse. Procedures are clearly understood and followed diligently by staff. Leaders work extremely well with local charities and other agencies to ensure that pupils and families in challenging circumstances receive the appropriate guidance and support that they need.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They feel valued and cared for. They learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They are confident that there is always an adult in school they can talk to if they have any concerns. Pupils who spoke to me explained that, should they have any worries about things outside school, they can leave a note for the 'Worry Monster' who will eat their worries. Pupils are confident that a grown up, like the police community-support officer, can help to resolve their problems. Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take. They are confident that should any bullying occur, teachers would deal with it quickly.

Inspection findings

- I was interested to find out how you had designed your curriculum to break down the barriers to learning for pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged. Leaders have created a bright and welcoming learning environment in which most pupils thrive. They have designed a curriculum that supports pupils' well-being and social and emotional development well. Skilled staff work with pupils individually or in small groups to improve their confidence and self-esteem. You know your pupils and their families well. You work effectively with local and

national charities to enable pupils and their families to cope with any barriers to success.

- Leaders do not compromise on high academic expectations, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum is progressive and sequential, broken down into small steps that build on pupils' prior knowledge. Teachers use assessment information effectively to identify any gaps in pupils' understanding. They plan activities that enable pupils to catch up quickly. Resources are used well to support pupils' learning and provide appropriate challenge. Pupils who spoke to me said that they particularly enjoy the 'missing number' challenges in mathematics.
- Reading has a high priority in school. For example, you work with parents during weekly family learning sessions, which enables them to help their children develop their love of reading. Well-chosen books are used effectively to excite pupils' interest as writers. Phonics is taught systematically and consistently from Reception. Pupils use their phonics knowledge well and with increasing accuracy in their own writing. You utilise the local community and surrounding area well to provide exciting opportunities for pupils that enrich the curriculum and broaden their horizons. Work seen in pupils' books shows that they make good progress. This is especially true of disadvantaged pupils because of the good quality of the education that they receive. Pupils are happy and eager to learn.
- I also wanted to find out how you support pupils with SEND. Leaders are very knowledgeable about each child's unique circumstances and value each child as an individual. Evidence is gathered from a range of sources, including talking to staff in the early years settings children attend, observations, pupils' work and talking to parents. You work effectively with other professionals to gain access to training and resources which meet pupils' needs well. Positive relationships with families and other agencies ensure that pupils receive the additional help that they need. Pupils talk excitedly about their learning and take pride in their achievements. These actions contribute to pupils with SEND making good progress from their individual starting points. Leaders' work with colleagues when pupils move on to junior school ensures that the appropriate support is maintained.
- We also looked at the actions taken by leaders to ensure that children in Reception are ready for Year 1. Most children have a lower level of skills and knowledge than that of other children of a similar age nationally when they start school. Leaders work well with the early years provision children attend before they start in Reception. Parents speak highly of the well-thought-through activities that ensure children settle quickly into school. Children are happy, confident and busy. They demonstrate good levels of cooperation and recognise the importance of sharing and taking turns as they learn. Conversation flows freely as children learn and play. While all children make good progress, the proportion reaching a good level of development is slightly below the national average. Although an increasing proportion of children are ready for Year 1, the learning environment in the early years does not typically reflect the high quality seen in Year 1 and Year 2.

- Finally, I wanted to know what actions had been taken to improve the attendance of pupils who are persistently absent from school. You have introduced a number of successful initiatives to encourage pupils to attend school every day. For example, rewards, certificates and looking after the popular school mascot, Sam, the 'school attendance matters' owl. Attendance is now broadly in line with the national figures. You and your staff have worked diligently to ensure that parents understand the importance of their child attending school regularly and the impact that it has on the progress that pupils make. You swiftly follow up any absences from school. You work effectively with charities and agencies to ensure that pupils are safe. Leaders are acutely aware that attendance is a challenge for some families and that a small proportion of pupils are still persistently absent from school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- build on the improving attendance for the majority of pupils and consider more innovative ways to improve the attendance of the small group of pupils who are persistently absent from school
- continue to develop the learning environment in the early years so that it reflects the same high standard as in Year 1 and Year 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 Cumbria. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Stringer
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, other members of the leadership team and staff. I also spoke with four members of the governing body and had a separate phone conversation with the chair of governors. I also met with a representative of the local authority.

I visited classrooms with you, where I had the opportunity to speak with pupils and look at their work. I met with two groups of pupils formally during the day and I spoke with several parents at the start of the school day. I took account of 15 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 18 responses to the pupils' questionnaire. I also considered the eight free-text comments and the nine responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. I scrutinised pupils' assessment information and a range of documentation, including the single central record.