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Mrs Ann-Marie Lee  
Headteacher  
Brinsworth Whitehill Primary School  
Howlett Drive  
Brinsworth  
Rotherham  
South Yorkshire  
S60 5HT

Dear Mrs Lee

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Brinsworth Whitehill Primary School, Rotherham**

Following my visit to your school on 24 June 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- develop the skills of all governors so that they can interpret and use school data to compare the school's performance against other schools nationally
- ensure governors regularly check the school is on course to become a good school at its next inspection.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, middle leaders, three teachers, two members of the governing body and the National leader of Governance that is supporting the school. I also had a telephone conversation with the Chair of the Governing Body and met with a representative of

the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's plans for improvement and scrutinised other documents including pupil progress data, checks made on the quality of teaching and the single central record. You accompanied me on a tour of the school during which I sampled pupils' books and observed pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning.

## **Context**

There have been no changes in staffing since the last inspection. From September, a new leadership structure will be in place, with two members of staff promoted to assistant headteacher posts.

## **Main findings**

Your inspirational leadership is providing a very clear sense of direction and morale across the school is high. Members of staff are increasingly empowered and now work much more as a team. Teachers are increasingly confident and benefit from the mutual support they provide for one another. You have raised expectations through setting ambitious targets which you are on track to achieve. The school is improving rapidly.

The early years unit has improved since the previous inspection. The outdoor area has been extended and a wide range of new resources have been added to enhance the learning opportunities. Children can now move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas and can choose from a wide range of engaging activities. Adults understand their roles and work skilfully with the children to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Recently finalised assessments show the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has risen significantly and is now in line with the national average for 2014. The early years leader has introduced a number of strategies to help parents better understand how they can help their child to learn, and more parents now take advantage of opportunities to stay and support their child in the classroom.

At Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in phonics (the sounds letters make) has risen sharply to be well above the 2014 national average. By the end of key Stage 1, levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics have also risen and now match those seen nationally. However, current assessments indicate the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics remains below 2014 national averages.

Pupils are on track to make better progress across Key Stage 2. The most recent teacher assessments and the work in pupils' books indicates almost all pupils are on track to make expected progress with a high proportion on track to make more than expected progress. As a result, pupils in the current Year 6 are on course to attain higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics than last year. Standards in spelling, punctuation and grammar are also on track to rise. An increasing number of

pupils are now working towards the highest Level 6 in writing and mathematics. Pupils have also begun to acquire a greater breadth of knowledge and skills across other subjects because teachers are integrating good subject knowledge into cross curricular projects more effectively.

You make regular checks on teaching which show the quality to be improving rapidly. In order to strengthen teaching further you have revised the marking policy and will introduce a whole school approach to improve handwriting in September. Your recent checks have shown the quality of marking is improving. Teachers now expect pupils to correct errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar and are now given time to respond to comments and improve their work.

You have provided training for middle leaders and devolved more responsibility to them to monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. In addition they now contribute more to the professional development of their colleagues and regularly identify and share the good practice in the school. As a result of their contribution, the quality of teaching is improving.

The external review of governance has been completed, although the National Leader of Governance that led the review is continuing to support the governing body. The review highlighted the need for governors to strengthen their understanding of school performance data so that they can better evaluate pupil progress and attainment. Under the skilful guidance of the Chair of the Governing Body, the governors are now more actively involved in checking the quality of the school's work. Governors now make regular visits and feedback their findings to the full governing body. However, the governors do not have a system in place to check whether the school is on course to become a good school. Such systems are needed to enable governors to evaluate strengths and weaknesses and hold leaders to account more effectively.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority is providing light touch support and challenge in recognition of the rapid progress the school is making. Where necessary, members of staff have visited other schools to learn from their practice.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Rotherham.

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith

**Her Majesty's Inspector**