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12 November 2014

Paul Shanks
Headteacher
Gaywood Community Primary School
Field Lane
King's Lynn
PE30 4AY

Dear Mr Shanks

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Gaywood Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 11 November 2014, 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 July 2014. 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:

- ensure that newly introduced procedures to assess and monitor pupils' progress become firmly embedded this term to enable teachers to illustrate clearly how well all pupils are doing over time.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, three senior leaders and four governors to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. A telephone discussion was held with the local authority to gain their view of the school. The school improvement and action plans were evaluated. Walking the school with you enabled me to see pupils at work in lessons.

Context

Since the last inspection, you have reorganised your senior leadership and management team to clarify roles and responsibilities and provide staff with more time to carry out their duties. One teacher has left the school.

Main findings

You have responded promptly to the issues raised in the last inspection. A concise action plan which complements the school's three-year improvement plan is suitably focused on improving teaching, raising achievement and increasing the effectiveness of leadership and management.

Overall results improved this year. A higher percentage of pupils in Year 1 passed the national phonics test compared to the previous year. In Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics were above national averages. In Key Stage 2 a higher percentage of pupils than last year made expected progress and met national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.

Not enough more able pupils in Years 2 and 6 attained higher levels, and this remains a key priority for further improvement. Expectations of pupils identified as gifted and talented and as more able are now higher; teachers are providing them with harder, more challenging work to do. You and other senior leaders are monitoring the impact of this during learning walks and lesson observations. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 improved this year, demonstrating that the school's actions to narrow the gap in performance are working. However, fewer disadvantaged pupils made expected progress in reading compared with other pupils.

Training for teaching assistants has clarified their roles in leading and supporting pupils' learning. Expectations of staff are higher. Teachers are expected to show in their planning how they will use teaching assistants in and outside of lessons. Scrutiny of these plans and observations from learning walks are providing you with a clearer picture of the impact teaching assistants are having on pupils' learning and progress.

New procedures for systematically assessing pupils' progress have been implemented this term. Further training is planned to increase teachers' and senior leaders' understanding of how this information can be used to ensure that all pupils make the progress expected of them. You recognise that these procedures need embedding this term to enable teachers to show how well all pupils are doing over time.

Additional training for teachers and teaching assistants in teaching phonics, and further training and support for staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage are leading to a better understanding of what staff must do to ensure pupils are fully prepared for Key Stage 1. Marking of pupils' books is becoming more consistent. Pupils are encouraged to take time to read and respond to the comments made by teachers. Regular marking is not reminding pupils about how to present their work neatly or the importance of completing all work.

Your senior leaders feel that they now have time to carry out their monitoring duties and this is enabling them to work together as a team to improve provision. Leaders of all subjects are in place. Temporary arrangements have been made to lead English and a new teacher has been appointed to lead mathematics from January 2015. You and other senior leaders are using the information gained from increased monitoring of the quality of teaching and checking the quality of pupils' work to thoroughly evaluate the school's effectiveness.

Following the recent external review, the governing body has responded promptly to the recommendations made to improve governance. Governors show a detailed understanding of their roles in supporting and challenging senior leaders to make improvements. They are well-organised and are using the school's action plans to monitor the rate of improvement being made. You and your middle leaders are expected to share with them on a regular basis the improvements made to the school.

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

External support

You and your governors continue to work in partnership with the local authority to aid the school's improvement. The school has joined the Norfolk Good to Great programme to enable it to become much more effective in readiness for its next inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector