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Mr M Colcombe
Headteacher
Hareclive Academy
Moxham Drive
Hartcliffe
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Dear Mr Colcombe

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hareclive Academy

Following my visit to your school on 22 January 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 September 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:

- demonstrate the impact of planned actions for school improvement by ensuring that senior leaders and governors check that each action is having a positive effect on raising pupil achievement.
- ensure that all systems for safer recruitment are kept in one place and easily accessible for checking and updating.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, two senior leaders, the Chair of the Local Governing Body, who is also a member of the multi-academy Trust Board, and the school improvement officer to discuss the action taken since

the last inspection. The inspector visited all classes and looked at pupils' work in their books. She also spoke informally to pupils during lunchtime. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

Since the inspection and following the internal promotion of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader to the senior leadership team, a new teacher for Reception has been appointed. A teacher has also been appointed on a temporary basis to cover a maternity leave in the Early Years Foundation Stage. An administrator and a teaching assistant have also been appointed recently. The school is undergoing a programme of refurbishment.

Main findings

You explained that, given your volume of work supporting two local schools who were both in special measures, you 'took your eye off the ball' at Hareclive. Following the inspection you immediately altered your school improvement plan so that it aligned closely to the areas identified as requiring improvement at the inspection. This plan reflects the improvement areas well and is driving the work of the senior leaders to raise pupil achievement. By increasing the membership of the senior leadership team you have strengthened the role of leadership in the school. While leaders are clear about which aspect of school improvement they are responsible for, the way in which planned actions will be checked lacks detail and clarity. The safeguarding of pupils is given the highest attention but not all required paperwork is kept in one place needed and this means that checking and updating is not always easy and accessible.

Since the inspection you have taken a number of effective steps to ensure that there is a clearer focus on pupil achievement at Hareclive. Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is now checked every four weeks in Years 2 and 6 and every six weeks in all other year groups. Any concerns for individual pupils are flagged up through a system of colours which highlight patterns of progress. Teachers' lesson plans are then adjusted and checked to make sure that they meet the needs of the pupils. Senior leaders have a much clearer idea about the progress being made by the pupils who are eligible for additional funding.

An external audit of the academy's use of pupil premium has been undertaken since the inspection. It identified a number of strengths but also indicated where systems needed to be much tighter. The deputy head teacher now has a greater insight into how this funding is spent and visits to other schools to see best practice have supported improvements. The school has developed a checking system which clearly shows how much pupil premium funding has been spent on each child and what the impact of this funding has had on individual achievement. It also indicates how much of the funding is left for each pupil thus enabling them to carefully consider

how to efficiently direct any available resources. Class teachers are also much clearer about which pupils are eligible for additional funding and now regularly check that they are making greater gains in their learning as a result. The impact of additional training for the special educational needs coordinator can be seen in the improvement of provision for these pupils which is based on a greater knowledge of their individual needs.

A range of programmes to support literacy and mathematics are more effectively supporting those pupils who find these skills challenging. The adoption of a new whole school approach to the teaching of mathematics is ensuring that there is a greater consistency to the learning of key skills in this subject. Effective training has helped the teachers understand that all their lessons have a purpose which needs to be shared and understood by the pupils. This training has also focused on helping teachers to consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge by asking them relevant questions to reinforce and extend their understanding. This makes the pupils think harder about what they have learnt and encourages them to find out more. The neatness and accuracy of the work in pupils' books indicate that teacher expectations of what they can achieve have improved significantly. Work is presented neatly and is consistently marked throughout the school. Classroom and corridor displays both reflect good quality work and support pupils to develop their learning further. Pupils know what their teachers marking means and they conscientiously fix any mistakes during a dedicated 'further improvement time', each morning. Your work to extend the most able and gifted pupils has been maintained well with other schools in the local area.

Since the pupil premium review governors have a much clearer understanding of their role in monitoring the impact that this additional funding has on pupil achievement. They are able to use the new school checking system to find out how well the funds are being used. By linking each governor to a specific subject governors are becoming more involved in the school. They are also ensuring that the notes taken from their meetings show how they challenge senior leaders and hold them to account. The governors have been involved in the drawing up of the school improvement plan. They have a specific section on their own development but there is limited information on how they are going to check that improvements are happening.

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

The school is using two improvement programmes to support their drive in standards. One of these programmes focuses specifically on ensuring that subject planning covers the essential skills that pupils need to learn. This is enabling teachers to make sure that pupils learn consistently and build on any previous

knowledge, understanding and skills they have. The other programme is involved in strengthening the leadership of the school and improving ways to check how well pupils learn. It has also helped the senior leaders focus on making improvements to the school environment, the impact of which can be seen in the redecorated classrooms and the consistent approach to displays. Improvements can also be seen in the outdoor learning environment which now includes an all-weather surface, a climbing wall and a permanent castle structure for creative play. The school improvement officer has helped senior leaders to develop their skills when they talk to teachers about lesson observations they have carried out in individual classes. Just recently the school improvement officer has carried out a welfare interview with all staff, the findings of which will be used to feed into further school improvement plans.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Local Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Bristol and the Academies Advisors Unit at the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone
Her Majesty's Inspector