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Mr Ralf Muller
Acting headteacher
Weston Coyney Junior School
Princess Drive
Weston Coyney
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST3 6NG

Dear Mr Muller

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Weston Coyney Junior School, Stoke-On-Trent

Following my visit to your school on 19 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders 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 leaders and governors regularly check that additional government funding (pupil premium) is being used effectively so that gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates are closed in all year groups and subjects
- provide additional support and training to governors to enable them to accurately and thoroughly evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses so that they are clear about which aspects of the school's work are not yet good.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you as acting headteacher and with the consultant headteacher who is providing support to the school. I also met with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I made brief visits to classrooms and spoke to pupils about their work. I met with two parents and considered four letters from parents. I reviewed the findings of the school's most recent survey of parents' views. In addition I evaluated a range of documents including records of pupils' achievement and information about the checks that leaders make on the work of teachers.

Context

The substantive headteacher, who was absent at the time of the first monitoring inspection, has resigned. The local authority are in the process of finalising plans to bring additional leadership capacity into the school by employing a national leader of education (NLE), who will act as an executive headteacher. You will remain as head of school with continuing support from the consultant headteacher. The post of deputy headteacher remains vacant. The assistant headteacher retired at the end of the summer term. Two newly qualified teachers joined the school in September but one left the school in October. There has been a re-structuring of support staff roles and responsibilities.

Main findings

School leaders are now using assessment information more effectively. School leaders have ensured that teachers have had a range of opportunities to work with colleagues from within and beyond the school to check that their assessments of the standard of pupils' work are accurate. The local authority has also carried out a number of moderation visits in order to check that assessment judgements are correct. Leaders meet each half term with teachers to discuss the progress of pupils in their class. This means that they are able to identify underachievement more quickly and put in place appropriate support for pupils.

School information about pupils' progress since September shows that, in most classes and subjects, progress is accelerating and an increasing proportion of pupils are now making at least expected progress. However, in some year groups this recent improvement is not yet sufficient to make up for slow progress in the past. In some classes and subjects, gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates remain large. Since the last monitoring inspection in June, leaders have reviewed the way that pupil premium funding is spent to ensure that it is more closely targeted on eligible pupils who are at risk of underachieving. This is a positive change but you acknowledge that further work is required in order that the

impact of different interventions and teaching approaches can be systematically evaluated by leaders and governors and the findings used to inform next steps.

Leaders make regular visits to classrooms and check the work in pupils' books. Leaders are using their findings from these activities, along with information about pupils' progress, to evaluate the quality of teaching in different classes and subjects. The records kept from these checks show that at times leaders do not focus enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. In particular, leaders do not routinely evaluate the progress of different groups of pupils such as the most able or disadvantaged pupils. Records indicate that feedback to teachers includes the identification of strengths as well identifying areas for improvement. However, it is not clear how and when these areas for improvement are followed up or how leaders check that required improvements have been made.

The school has made considerable improvements to the way that pupils' behaviour is managed and monitored. The new behaviour co-ordinator provides training and support to staff which is helping them to deal appropriately and consistently with incidents of poor behaviour. Any incidents are carefully recorded and this information is analysed to identify any patterns or trends and to inform next steps for individual pupils. Staff now have higher expectations for pupils' behaviour. As a consequence of these improvements, the number of exclusions has reduced considerably and the number of incidents of poor behaviour continues to decline. During my short visits to classrooms, the large majority of pupils were working well and paying attention to their teachers. The parents who communicated with me during this visit and the large majority who responded to the school's parent survey say that behaviour is now well managed and that their children are safe in school.

Parents also commented positively on recent improvements in communication between school and home. Almost all parents who responded to the school's survey agreed that any concerns are listened to and where appropriate acted upon by staff.

Governors have worked with the acting headteacher and the consultant headteacher to carry out a review of the school staffing structure. Together they have made a number of changes which are beginning to have a positive impact. For example, new arrangements at lunchtime have resulted in a reduction in the number of incidents of poor behaviour. Governors acknowledge that pupil premium funding has not been used effectively in the past. They are now confident that this funding is being targeted and spent more appropriately but are not yet able to give examples of its impact on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Governors know that the school is improving in some areas and understand that considerable improvements are still required. However, they have not engaged in in-depth evaluation of the school's performance in all aspects of its work and so are not fully aware of what is required in order for the school to be judged as good. Governors recognise that they require further training in order to be able to hold leaders to account for their work.

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 local authority lead for school improvement is a regular visitor to the school. She visits classrooms and looks at the work in pupils' books as well as evaluating and checking school information about pupils' attainment and progress. As a result of these visits, the local authority has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The lead for school improvement has also worked with staff to develop their skills and confidence in teaching reading and writing. The work in pupils' books indicates that this is beginning to have a positive impact. The local authority is currently carrying out a review of governance in order that this aspect of leadership might be further strengthened.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Stoke-On-Trent.

Yours sincerely

Morag Kophamel

Her Majesty's Inspector