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Andrew Jenkins
Dovecote Primary and Nursery School
Greencroft
Nottingham
NG11 8EY

Dear Mr Jenkins

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Dovecote Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on insert date of inspection, 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:

- Ensure that the new marking and feedback initiatives are consistently applied across the school and that feedback in books is easy to read so that pupils can act upon advice given
- Implement planned support for pupils to improve their spoken grammar

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, other staff members, the Chair of the Governing Body, the previous Chair of the Governing Body and spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone. I visited all classrooms, held discussions with pupils and looked at some of their books and other work. I evaluated the school improvement plan and

the school's literacy and mathematics plans. I scrutinized the most recent nationally produced data on the pupils' achievement, a self-evaluation report prepared by the school and the outcomes of monitoring activities carried out by senior leaders, including governors.

Context

Since the last inspection in September 2014 there have been changes to the structure of the governing body and in governors' roles and responsibilities.

Main findings

The school's leadership team, including governors, have responded well to the judgments of the last inspection and have acted swiftly to address issues raised. There has been a short period of reflection and consideration for all leaders, followed quickly by a dynamism and determination to effect changes where needed. There are clear signs that actions taken are now having a positive impact on school improvement.

Leaders rightly acknowledge that improving the quality of both leadership and teaching will underpin raising levels of pupil achievement. They have introduced tightly monitored performance management processes which are closely linked to school improvement to support this. The school's leaders now have a well-informed picture of the quality of teaching across the school. Support for staff is being put into place as needed to ensure that their ambition that all teaching is at least good is achieved quickly. Expectations of staff and pupils have been raised, from the appearance and organisation of classrooms and displays in corridors to the quality and presentation of work in books.

There has been a sharp focus on the comments made by teachers on pupils' work and expectations for teachers' marking have been clarified. There is clear evidence that this is now having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Pupils across the school understand the new system and can say how it helps them to learn and make progress. At times, some pupils find it difficult to read comments written in their books, a problem which the school acknowledges, and which should now be addressed. Similarly, school leaders are aware that the new marking policy is not yet implemented consistently and tight monitoring processes have been introduced to tackle this.

School leaders have introduced a new curriculum and have simultaneously established rigorous processes to monitor its effectiveness and the impact on learning. There is a clear focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills to underpin learning, including greater support for families when children enter the nursery. Parents speak highly of the help that they are receiving.

Staff are working hard to improve progress in writing. Checklist grids have been introduced which pupils say is helping them to improve their written work and they can proudly show evidence of this. There are now well planned opportunities for pupils to write at length and pupils are enjoying these activities. Writing walls are being used to highlight progress in work and showcase excellence. A planned handwriting policy will be introduced shortly and will apply to pupils and staff. The school is aware that pupils' spoken grammar can be a barrier to learning although the school development plan does not currently reflect the work that is needed to overcome this.

There is now a greater emphasis on investigation and problem solving in mathematics lessons and pupils speak with enthusiasm about these changes to their lessons. In some classes there are well established strategies in place, such as the use of a 'double-platinum box', to extend the learning of pupils working at all levels. Pupils in these classes speak excitedly about how this works and how it helps them to learn. Leaders recognise the need to extend this approach throughout the school but this has not yet taken place.

School leaders at all levels are increasingly scrutinising progress and achievement data and recognise that further analysis will give them an even greater understanding of pupils' needs and how best to put in support. There is evidence that leaders have implemented strong systems to check that their actions to improve both teaching and learning are having a positive impact and to address underperformance.

Governors are determined that all pupils in the school will succeed and are bringing much greater challenge and scrutiny to leaders. They have an increasingly accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development and are taking appropriate action as required. The revised format of the governing body is ensuring that governors' strengths and expertise are well matched to their areas of responsibility. The Chair of Governors has been dynamic in introducing systems to hold school leaders, including governors, to account and to clarify and raise expectations of leaders' roles.

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 continues to support the school and has provided practical advice, a programme of professional development for staff and partnership support from a local leader of education. School leaders have taken full advantage of the support provided and there is evidence of the impact that this is now beginning to have.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Nottingham City local authority.

Yours sincerely

Karen Gannon
Her Majesty's Inspector