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Mr G Moore
Headteacher
Abbotswood Junior School
Ringwood Road
Southampton
SO40 8EB

Dear Mr Moore

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Abbotswood Junior School

Following my visit to your school on Tuesday 28 April 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 January 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, both deputy headteachers, some subject leaders, two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We completed short visits to classrooms together, during which I spoke to some pupils about their work and looked through some of their books. I evaluated the school improvement plan, reviewed documentation about the work of the governing body and scrutinised evaluations of teaching and learning.

Context

Since the last inspection two part-time and one full-time teacher have left the school. Three teachers have joined the school to fill these positions.

Main findings

You provide ambitious, strategic and skilled leadership at the school. Your focus on improving teaching and learning is unwavering. Staff at the school now share your vision for effective teaching and learning. As a result, the work you are doing to improve the school is now rapid and sustained.

Leaders at the school have responded positively to the outcomes of the previous inspection. You have decided to restructure the leadership of the school to build capacity in key roles. Leaders at all levels are already clearer about their responsibilities to improve pupils' achievement. You have deployed your full-time teaching coach effectively to support improvements to teaching. Teachers now get useful and instant feedback about their practice. As a result, there is already much greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

Leaders' understanding of pupils' achievement is sharper. Subject leaders are now using data about pupils' progress to evaluate where pupils' achievement needs to improve. The new method for presenting assessment data has enabled teachers to effectively analyse the learning of different groups of pupils. This means that all staff, including leaders, have a much better overview of how pupils learn over time. This means staff are now identifying pupils at risk of underachieving much sooner and amending provision to tackle this effectively.

Governors are already holding senior leaders more fully to account. This is because they have been quick to develop new roles on the governing body to target their work in areas of relative weakness. For example, there is now a governor who has a specific overview of how the pupil premium grant is used. The robust challenge to leaders she has already provided has successfully raised leaders' expectations of what needs to be improved in this area of work.

Teaching is improving rapidly. Your pursuit of excellence in the delivery of your teaching and learning policy has already raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, lessons are more challenging for pupils. This is because teachers are using assessment information in lessons more effectively so that they target their teaching on what pupils need to learn next. As a result, all groups of pupils are beginning to make better progress.

Leaders have rightly identified the need to do more to narrow the gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils at the school and their peers. Leaders now track the progress of disadvantaged pupils effectively and review this against how they use the pupil premium grant. As a result, leaders have accurately identified where changes are needed. Improvements made to provision in this area, however, are yet to have an impact on disadvantaged pupils' progress.

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

Leaders have made very good use of external support. For example, they have responded proactively to the robust challenge provided by the local authority adviser who works with the school. The adviser has also given useful advice to leaders about improving leadership and approaches to improving how pupils' achievement is tracked. Leaders have made good use of the findings of the pupil premium review. The review gave useful next steps, so that leaders were able to act rapidly to improve this area of their work. Leaders have already put in place the majority of points for development that were set.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Barnes

Her Majesty's Inspector