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18 June 2015

Mrs Jo Geary
Headteacher
Grange Farm Primary School
Bancroft Rise
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS14 1AX

Dear Mrs Geary

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Grange Farm Primary School, Leeds

Following my visit with Janet Lunn, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school 17 June 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 February 2015. 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.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, other senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the schools' action plan. We visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked to pupils. We scrutinized pupils' mathematics work with the mathematics leader to see what improvements you have made to teaching and learning since the inspection. I looked closely at some English work to check on the effectiveness of the teaching of reading.

Context

There have been no staffing changes since the inspection.

Main findings

You clearly expect all leaders be accountable for school improvement and with their help, you have taken decisive action to tackle the areas for improvement.

You say your leaders are now at the heart of school improvement and you expect them to be the key drivers of it. They have an accurate view of how well the school is doing, because you have sharpened the cycle of monitoring, evaluation, support and challenge to ensure teaching improves at a pace. You have identified precisely what individual teachers need to improve and what action you need to take; this includes whole school training and more bespoke professional development for teachers and teaching assistants. You describe this as an 'intelligent approach' to improving teaching and there is no lack of willingness among your teachers to improve. Already, this is resulting in improved outcomes for pupils across the school in mathematics and reading. You have demonstrated that this approach works through the improvements seen in writing. The local authority now uses your school as a model of good practice for this subject.

With the support of the local authority, your teachers have revisited the national curriculum in mathematics. This has helped them to improve their understanding of the curriculum requirements and has raised their expectations of what pupils need to achieve. As you expected, the mathematics' leader has shown that she has the knowledge and skills to drive forward the improvements needed and you have given her the time to do this. She has helped teachers understand the importance of checking pupils' work more regularly in lessons to provide the support and challenge needed. This means some pupils, particularly the most able, have more opportunities to deepen their understanding, while others get the support they need to address misconceptions. Our scrutiny of pupils' work, what we saw in lessons and pupils' performance data show the impact this is having on pupils' learning and progress since the inspection.

You have focused sharply on the underachievement in mathematics. You have tightened the systems and procedures for assessing pupils and checking on their progress. You have improved the assessment system used by teachers, so they focus more on what pupils need to learn, know and understand. This is helping to prevent and close gaps in learning. You hold teachers to account more robustly for the progress pupils make and target interventions to help close gaps in achievement sooner rather than later. This is evident in the progress disadvantaged pupils are now making in Key Stage 1.

Even though reading was not an area for improvement from the inspection, you have continued to work on raising standards. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has risen to above that seen nationally and you have fine-tuned the way that you develop pupils' understanding and increased opportunities for this, whilst maintaining the strong focus on the

teaching of phonics. This was clearly seen in pupils' work and what we saw in lessons. Teachers are making purposeful links between reading and writing and, in guided reading lessons, they plan and pitch pupil's work at the right level to challenge and deepen thinking. This is giving pupils more opportunities to reason and explain.

The governing body has changed the structure of its committees to enable a small group of governors to focus and check on the progress you are making with the actions to improve the school. This involves these governors coming into school to check for themselves. Some governors regularly meet with the local authority and you to review the school's progress. The governing body has developed an action plan in line with the school's action plan. This involves it making robust checks on what you and your leaders say. It clearly highlights the contributions individual governors will make to the evaluation of the progress the school is making.

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

The school improvement adviser has taken personal responsibility to ensure the school gets the support it needs. You say you have found this invaluable during your first year of headship.

You have made effective use of school partnerships and work with the local authority to improve the effectiveness of work scrutiny and evaluate how teaching strategies help pupils improve. You also use these partners to help you secure the accuracy of assessment.

Initially, the local authority worked with you to lead improvements in mathematics, because you felt there was a body of work that needed to improve, such as developing the curriculum in mathematics, before you honed individual teacher's skills. From this, you were able to audit and assess what each teacher needed to know and understand about the teaching of mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Bowyer

Her Majesty's Inspector