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Carl Braithwaite
Ollerton Community Primary School
Whinney Lane
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Newark
NG22 9TH

Dear Mr Braithwaite

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ollerton Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 08 July 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 on 24 February 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. The school should take further action to:

- quickly implement the recommendations from the recent review into the effectiveness of governance
- ensure that all governors responsible for monitoring the pupils' progress receive sufficient training so that they feel confident to challenge the school over the performance of pupils
- ensure that all teachers consistently follow the marking policy so that all children are given sufficient advice on how to improve, particularly in mathematics
- ensure that leaders continually track the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in all year groups against those who do not receive the pupil premium, and ensure governors receive this information so that they can ensure that gaps are closing.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, a selection of teaching staff from different key stages, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan and undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work. I also toured the school with you to see lessons taking place in different year groups, and examined the school's records of safeguarding checks on staff, governors and volunteers.

Context

There have been no significant changes to the school since the section 5 inspection.

Main findings

One of the key areas for improvement set out in the recent inspection report was the need for leaders and governors to draw up effective plans to improve the weaknesses in the school's provision, and to implement those plans effectively. I am pleased to report that the plans you have devised are comprehensive, well focused and ambitious. You have also taken some important first steps towards implementing them.

Pupils are receiving more opportunities to complete extended writing in subjects other than English. This, along with better feedback, is helping to improve their accuracy, accelerate their progress and enabling them to write to a higher quality. Pupils' work that I looked at during my visit confirms that teachers' marking overall is beginning to show pupils more of what they need to improve upon in their written work. Where advice is given, pupils are acting upon it. I saw, for example, some striking examples of good questioning by teachers in pupils' books, and pupils responding to this positively. However, effective marking is not consistent in all classes yet and senior leaders need to continue to ensure that good advice for pupils is being given, and followed, throughout the school. Marking in mathematics has also begun to improve, but is less well developed. Because there are too few examples of advice for pupils, progress is slower than it should be in some year groups. Again, leaders need to continue to insist that all teachers give advice consistently, and check that this happens. I was pleased to see that all the work I examined shows at least expected progress from pupils. However, the proportion showing good progress needs to increase quickly.

Teachers who I spoke with told me that they feel positive about the recent improvements you and other leaders have made, and believe they are becoming part of a united team where expectations are consistently high across the school. As well as following the school's teaching and learning policy, they are working more closely with teaching assistants. This is resulting in an improved understanding of what pupils have achieved, as well as knowing what they need to do next.

Your plans to improve pupils' behaviour are appropriate, including the training you have planned for mid-day assistants this autumn. Pupils I saw on the playground were both sensible and calm at the end of lunchtime and the transition to lessons was smoothly managed by your staff. The work with the small number of families who do not send their children to school regularly has begun, and persistent absence has begun to reduce. Among other measures, you are planning to employ a full-time child and family support worker in September to improve attendance further.

You have already reviewed how effectively you have used the additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority (the pupil premium). As a result of your review, you have adjusted your provision for disadvantaged pupils to ensure that any support they receive is effective in raising their achievement. However, you are not currently monitoring their progress against other pupils in the school. As a result, it is not possible for governors to ensure that gaps are closing in every year group.

Governors are committed to the school and are keen to improve their skills and effectiveness. They, and you, understand the need to take tough decisions where necessary to ensure that progress for all pupils is good. The external review of their effectiveness has taken longer to complete than necessary, and it is vital that its full recommendations, due later this week, are implemented immediately. Governors I spoke to say that they are keen to take a more active part in the school, to visit lessons and look at pupils' work alongside subject leaders, so that they can have a better understanding of teaching, learning and progress. They appreciate the need for training on performance data so that they can confidently hold yourself and other senior leaders to account for the progress that different groups of pupils are 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 local authority has facilitated a valuable partnership between Ollerton and Forest View Junior School, linked to the outstanding Minster Teaching School Alliance. This has resulted in a useful joint action plan to, among other things, devise a new assessment system, as well as helping some of the teachers at Ollerton understand how to plan for pupils' next steps in learning. The advisor for the local authority has also undertaken joint lesson observations. As a result, leaders are able to make sound judgements about the quality of teaching. The local authority has also coordinated the review of governance and checks that the school's improvement plan is being implemented effectively. The advisor is fully committed to ensuring the support from the local authority is continued.

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

Yours sincerely

Roary Pownall
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority