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Amardeep Panesar
Head of School
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Dear Miss Panesar

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kingfisher Community Primary School

Following my visit to your academy on 3 December 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 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 in order to become a good school.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the executive headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the trust. The meetings focused on the actions taken since the last inspection. Together with the executive headteacher, we visited all classrooms, talking to some pupils informally. Improvement planning was evaluated along with a range of other documents, including evidence of leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching, minutes of meetings of the governing body and the academy's own records of pupils' attainment and progress.

Context

Since the last inspection, three members of the teaching staff have left. All have been replaced by qualified teachers. The governing body has recently changed its structure, with one local governing board now working across the four schools in the trust's Medway hub.

Main findings

Since your appointment as head of school, just a matter of days before the last inspection, you have worked with energy and focus to bring about the necessary changes to address the areas identified as requiring improvement. You have been supported in this work by the executive headteacher, who was appointed at the same time as you. Together, you are a strong force for school improvement.

Self-evaluation and the resulting planning for improvement are strong aspects of your leadership. Your partnerships with both the executive headteacher and the director of school improvement for the trust have ensured you have prioritised those areas that need most improvement first. During my monitoring inspection I gained a clear vision of your strategic insight and your ability to address those aspects of the school which require improvement.

You have rightly made your prime focus improving the quality of teaching, so that pupils make better progress. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are rising. The level of challenge offered within classrooms is also improving. During my visits to classrooms we saw evidence of where this is having a good impact on the way pupils engage with learning. However, in some classes this is not so highly developed and you are working with staff to ensure a more consistent approach across the school, especially with those teachers who appear to work harder in lessons than the pupils they are teaching.

Because you monitor the quality of teaching well, staff benefit from timely and useful advice about how to improve their work. So far, support and training and development for class teachers has been provided mainly from within the school, with some input from a specialist teacher within the trust. There are plans to widen the scope of support from the trust's Medway hub schools and across the wider trust, although these are yet to be formalised.

It was clear during my time in the school that behaviour and the willingness of pupils to engage with learning are improving. You were able to provide me with evidence of the impact of the new behaviour policy which you introduced in September and I was able to witness this policy in action during my visits to classrooms. In most classes pupils displayed a real engagement with the learning process. However, in some classes, low-level off-task behaviour was clear to see, particularly where the level of challenge could have been higher. Again, you and other school leaders are

aware of this and working with staff to ensure that all pupils are inspired and challenged to work hard and achieve their best in every lesson.

Much work has gone into raising standards in writing. During my time in classrooms it was clear that the school's work on improving the quality of feedback, both written and verbal, is helping with this. The support of the trust's specialist teacher for English, as well as training for all staff in delivering high-quality phonics (letters and the sounds they make) lessons and in-school support for the teaching of writing, have also helped. There has not been enough time to measure the long-term impact of these actions yet. Nevertheless, evidence seen in books and a clear impression that writing has a high profile across the school, lead me to believe that appropriate improvements are being made.

Governors are dedicated and support the school well. They maintain a strategic approach and are active across the trust's Medway hub. The recent restructure to form one local governing board across the four Medway trust schools will allow a more focused approach. For example, this will enable governors to carry out their statutory duties efficiently, utilising their valuable expertise and experience of supporting school improvement in order to improve pupils' outcomes.

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 support offered by the trust has enabled you to remain focused on the areas for improvement that matter most. The support for middle leaders has also had good impact, ensuring they are now better equipped with the broader leadership and management skills required to execute their specific leadership roles. A programme to enhance subject leadership comes next in the trust's well-thought-through plan for support.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Chief Executive of the Griffin Schools Trust and the Director of Children's Services for Medway.

Yours sincerely

Clive Close

Her Majesty's Inspector