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Ms Suzanne D'alton
Redgate Primary School
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Dear Ms D'alton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Redgate Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 25 February 2016, 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 October 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

At the previous section 5 inspection, which took place in October 2013, 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 in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that all success criteria in the action plan are measurable and allow governors to check easily that actions are having the intended impact.
- ensure that teaching assistants have the appropriate questioning skills and use them consistently in line with your expectations to deepen and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- enhance further the reporting of the impact of actions arising from the pupil

premium grant so that governors are fully aware of the impact of this grant on the attainment of pupils. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and your senior leadership team, a group of governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also held a telephone conversation with the Chair of the Governing Body. I evaluated the school's action plan and scrutinised other documents relating to school improvement, including those relating to your monitoring of the quality of teaching and performance management. We visited every classroom together to see the school at work and speak with pupils.

Context

Since the last inspection, the deputy headteacher has been absent from school due to a long-term illness. Two teachers have temporarily been appointed to assistant headteachers and two new governors have joined the governing body.

Main findings

Since the last inspection, which took place when you had only been headteacher at the school for a few weeks, you have not ceased in your drive to improve the school. You have developed strong professional relationships with staff and share a common vision for school improvement.

Your action plan identifies appropriate priorities for improvement that are closely aligned to those identified at the last inspection. It also includes other priorities you have subsequently highlighted as a result of your rigorous monitoring, including the further development of provision for pupils who have special educational needs or a disability. The plan is well structured and appropriately detailed but the success criteria by which you will evaluate the plan's success are not always clear enough. Many, particularly those relating to pupils' achievement, are highly focused and clearly measurable while others are less well defined.

The school's senior leadership team is stronger because of the appointment of two middle leaders to the role of assistant headteachers. They have been given particular responsibilities that draw well on their respective areas of expertise. The appointment to the senior leadership team of another member of staff who has responsibility for assessment brings additional capacity and expertise to the leadership of the school.

Governance is improving in the school because of new governor appointments. Your new governors have a professional background in education and recent and current experience of school leadership. These governors complement the commitment, drive and enthusiasm exhibited by your existing governors while also bringing up-to-date professional education experience and challenge. Consequently, governors hold you and your senior leaders strongly to account for the impact of your actions. The relationships between senior leaders and governors are professionally strong and positive because you share a common ethos and goal to improve the school rapidly to provide the best of outcomes for pupils.

Leaders' understanding of the effectiveness of the school is improving strongly because of your increased rigour in monitoring the work and impact of teachers and other staff. Tracking of pupils' achievement has improved. More frequent monitoring of pupils' progress through well-structured and regular meetings with teachers allows you to identify quickly any pupil who is falling behind, and implement appropriate support and intervention. Records of these meetings show that discussions are detailed, and robust follow-up checks on previously identified actions are having the intended impact.

The quality of teaching is improving because your increased monitoring allows you to identify and celebrate good practice and address any issues or concerns quickly. You regularly visit classrooms and frequently scrutinise pupils' work in books, often alongside staff, to evaluate the work of teachers and ensure a consistent understanding of your expectations. Your robust use of the outcomes of your monitoring in association with the school's performance management procedures means that teachers have a clear understanding as to what you expect of them.

You have improved the tracking and reporting systems relating to the spending of the pupil premium grant. Consequently, you have been able to establish a good understanding of where the grant is spent and where it is most effective. This has allowed you to amend appropriately the spending plan for the grant to maximise its impact on standards of pupils' attainment. The external review of the use of the pupil premium grant, required at the last inspection, has been implemented and is due for completion shortly.

The quality of leadership of the early years is improving because the strengthened senior leadership team has members with particular experience and expertise in this field. Better-quality teaching in the early years, brought about by better leadership, has resulted both in a learning environment that is well organised and in activities for children that build on their interests and which develop their skills more effectively. Consequently, children's standards of achievement, demonstrated in the school's own tracking, are improving. Children in the early years engage well with learning and are eager to share their experiences with visitors. For example, children's encounter with some 'dinosaur droppings', and a set of monster footprints that appeared in their classroom, captivated their attention and stimulated them to practise their writing skills by making warning signs to prevent visitors stepping on

their discoveries. The tracking of children's progress and the quality of subsequent analysis of results in the early years is improving because of training and better leadership. As a result, teachers have a better understanding of what children know and are able to amend their planning to support children to achieve more.

The accuracy of assessment of pupils' achievement across the school is improving because you and your staff regularly review each other's judgements in whole-school staff meetings. This ensures consistency across the school. Additionally, you have widened teachers' experiences and increased their skills in judging work. This has come about as a result of the school's regular participation in events within your local cluster of schools, attendance at similar local authority-wide events and through participation in an assessment pilot programme that involves 14 schools across two local authorities. Consequently, you and your teachers are more confident in the school's assessment procedures and the accuracy of any judgements made. Teachers now use this information more effectively to plan tasks and challenges for pupils.

The quality of teaching is improving because you have implemented appropriate training to help staff reach the standards you expect of them. Opportunities for staff to visit other schools to observe and learn from good and outstanding practice are used well. Sharp predetermined foci for these visits ensure that staff concentrate on developing the appropriate skills required for your school to move forward. The quality of classroom management, the use of questioning to deepen pupils' knowledge, and levels of expectation and challenge in the tasks set for pupils are also improving because of the training staff receive in and out of school. You recognise, however, that further work needs doing to improve teaching assistants' use of questioning to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.

External support

The school draws well on external support from a variety of sources. The local authority has brokered additional support from a local leader in education, who visits regularly and provides additional challenge and support, which school leaders appreciate. Local authority officers respond quickly and appropriately to the school's needs and provide appropriate training, guidance and, where necessary, some additional financial support that is bringing about real positive change. The steering and monitoring group, attended by local authority officers, holds school leaders, governors and the local leader in education sharply to account and ensures the continued pace of improvement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Nixon
Her Majesty's Inspector