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12 April 2016

Mrs Brown
Headteacher
Compass Point: South Street School and Children's Centre
South Street
Bedminster
Bristol
BS3 3AU

Dear Mrs Brown

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Compass Point: South Street

Following my visit to your school on 21 March 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 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.

The school should take further action to:

- support those teachers who still require additional help and support to improve the quality of teaching by sharing best practice within the school
- improve the presentation of pupils' work.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and your assistant headteacher. I also met with five middle leaders, a representative of the local authority, two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body and a group of 10 pupils to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plans

were evaluated. You, your assistant headteacher and I visited all classes to observe pupils at work.

Context

A new headteacher took up her post in September 2015. She was joined by new phase leaders for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. At the same time six teaching assistants joined the school on a temporary basis. One Reception teacher has recently left and has been replaced by a teacher employed on a temporary contract. One teacher is currently on maternity leave and her post is being covered by a temporary teacher. The deputy headteacher has been absent on long-term sick leave since October 2015.

Main findings

It is evident that you have brought a clear sense of direction and drive to the school and this has been welcomed by staff, pupils and governors. You have quickly established a strong working partnership with your assistant headteacher and swift action has been taken to ensure that the school environment is a safe place to work and learn in. Together you have raised the expectations of both staff and pupils, and created a strong, confident culture.

The appointment of your middle leadership team has brought a robustness and rigour to the management of each key stage. The team regularly checks the quality of teaching and learning by observing lessons, looking at pupils' books and checking teachers' planning. This enables middle leaders to make sure that activities motivate and challenge the pupils. By working alongside colleagues from other schools, they have also ensured that their judgements are accurate and consistent. Your middle leaders do not shy away from challenging situations, such as poor teacher performance, and skilfully support those classes where teaching continues to require improvement.

A new way of teaching letters and sounds has had an impressive impact on reading standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. You have changed class timetables to ensure that the teaching of letters and sounds is a daily focus with the highest priority. Teachers in Key Stage 2 have received basic training on the teaching of letters and sounds which, in conjunction with the introduction of a new consistent approach to the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar, is helping pupils to improve their writing skills. Nevertheless, presentation skills remain a weaker element of some pupils' work.

You encourage teaching staff to make sure that the questions they ask during lessons make their pupils think hard about what they are learning. As pupils explained, 'We are encouraged to think outside the box and give reasons.' Subject leaders have noticed that this is helping your most-able pupils to think more deeply about their learning and apply their knowledge more widely. Pupils appreciate the

opportunities in class that they are given to reflect on any comments or corrections that their teachers have made in their books. This provides them with an opportunity to think for themselves, consolidate their learning and develop their skills further.

Following a review of the use of pupil premium funding, class teachers are now much clearer about which pupils in their class are in receipt of additional government funding. Extra help for these pupils is now based within their classrooms and this ensures that your teaching staff support individual needs. This has made them more accountable for the progress these pupils make.

Pupils are much more attentive in class because lessons are more interesting and engaging. Outings to museums, theatres and in and around the local environment are used as starting points for topics such as the ancient Egyptians and the Second World War. Pupils report that 'Lessons are much more fun.' They enjoy using their literacy skills to record their history and science findings, and apply their mathematical skills to a range of learning activities. Pupils also appreciate the opportunities they get to work on their own to develop their knowledge further.

The behaviour of pupils in classes and around school has improved significantly since the inspection. Pupils report that 'Everyone behaves much more sensibly because they understand the school rules.' You have established firm expectations of what is acceptable behaviour. Both teaching staff and pupils clearly understand the new rewards and sanctions system, which is an integral and exciting part of school life. A few of the pupils I spoke to during my visit raised some concerns about behaviour in the playground during lunchtime. You are fully aware that the current lack of space due to building repairs is causing some congestion at lunchtime, but this is very shortly to be resolved.

Although attendance rates have recently been affected by a virus, an improving pattern is emerging. This is because absences are now challenged by your learning mentor. Patterns and trends in the attendance rates of specific groups of pupils are checked and, working closely with the education welfare officer, action plans are set up to support and encourage parents to make sure their children do not miss any valuable learning time.

The governing body has already adopted the recommendations made in the external review of governance which took place in November 2015. They have developed a more strategic role, which has included the careful selection of new governors who have specific professional skills to support their work. They are delighted with the quality of the reports you produce, which help them to challenge the work of the school more rigorously. Regular visits to school have enabled governors to see first-hand improvements to teaching and pupil behaviour. They feel confident asking you and your teaching staff to explain the impact that a particular initiative or way of working has on pupils' learning.

External support

You are being well supported by a local leader in education from Victoria Park Primary School who works closely with you and your staff. The local authority keeps a close eye on the school and carries out regular reviews to assess the progress that is being made against the areas identified as requiring improvement. They have also provided specialist support teachers where required, such as in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Bristol. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone
Her Majesty's Inspector