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Mr Stuart Moody
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Moody

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ranskill Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 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 that you gave to me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in July 2014. 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, the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher of a partner school providing support to Ranskill, and a representative of the local authority. I visited all classrooms briefly, accompanied by you, looking at the pupils' work and holding discussions with the pupils. I looked at safeguarding records, the latest information available on the pupils' achievement, and the school's self-evaluation document, and evaluated the latest version of the school improvement plan.

Context

You have joined the school as the substantive headteacher since the previous monitoring visit. Half of the teaching staff is new to the school.

Main findings

At the time of the first monitoring visit, you were working with the school in a restricted capacity. The reason for carrying out this second monitoring visit and so the focus of the activities during the visit was that the long-term arrangements for the leadership of the school were uncertain, which was potentially a barrier to the school's improvement.

Your appointment as the substantive headteacher at the school has stabilised the senior leadership over the past year. You have been able, consequently, to provide the school with a stronger sense of direction and drive for improvement than was apparent at my previous visit. That direction is focused more sharply on bringing about necessary improvements in the quality of teaching. You have improved your school improvement plan accordingly, so that it is now more suitable as a tool for managing rapid improvements.

You immediately instigated a more rigorous, systematic and managed approach to improving the quality of teaching. You have put in place clearer and more regular activities for managing the performance of the staff, which, allied with planned opportunities for professional development, are now beginning to bear fruit. Your assessment information indicates the impact of this, in that the pupils' achievement has improved in all year groups and all subjects.

You have made significant changes in staffing and in the organisation of classes, some of which have been affected by difficult decisions and were not necessarily your preferred options. Nevertheless, the result has been more stable staffing and leadership arrangements than were the case at the time of my last visit, which are providing you with a better basis from which to make necessary improvements.

You are carrying out a broader range of activities to monitor the work of the school. As a result, your self-evaluation is better informed and the judgements that you are reaching are accordingly more incisive. The governing body supports the monitoring process well and is involved in discussing the outcomes and in contributing to the judgements reached in your self-evaluation.

I noted some particular and important improvements in the quality of teaching. I saw evidence of more consistent approaches to teaching mathematics, which were resulting in a good level of interest and engagement among the pupils, from the early years onwards.

I saw good evidence that the attention being paid to promoting high expectations for the pupils' presentation of their work and to improve their handwriting is having a positive effect. Those improvements are being assisted by the recently introduced target books that you are using with the pupils. The target books are helping the pupils to get a clearer understanding of what they are supposed to be learning and to what standard; they are clearer about what is expected of them.

Some clear challenges remain. The pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 declined in 2015. You are able to talk about specific issues concerning the cohorts of pupils concerned, but the decline shows that you are still overcoming the impact of a legacy of mediocre teaching. You have made important improvements, but they have yet to be sustained long enough to secure the better achievement by the pupils that is just becoming apparent.

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

You have benefited from a well-conceived and appropriate package of support from the local authority and a partner school. You are tapping into the range of opportunities provided well. The support is assisting with the improvements in the effectiveness of leadership and in the quality of teaching that I have noted.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector