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Mrs Alison Mann
Headteacher
Shirley Warren Learning Campus Primary & Nursery School
Warren Crescent
Southampton
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Dear Mrs Mann

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Shirley Warren Learning Campus Primary & Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 13 April 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 July 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- add interim milestones to the school's improvement plan so that the progress made by different groups of pupils can be tracked more precisely
- further develop the role of governors so that they hold school leaders more closely to account for the progress made by different groups of pupils
- accelerate the rate of progress made by pupils at key stage 2, and secure greater levels of consistently good teaching across the school.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your senior leadership team and two governors including the chair, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Discussions were also held with your six newly qualified teachers and a group of pupils from Year 6, to seek their views about the school. The day before the inspection I spoke to a representative from the local authority about the school. You and your deputy joined me on learning walk of six classes covering Year 1 to Year 3. I reviewed a sample of work from pupils in Year 6. I scrutinised a range of school documentation including your post-Ofsted improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation, information about the progress made by pupils and minutes of meetings held by the governing body. I also looked at the school's website and the school's single central record.

Context

The former deputy headteacher left the school at the end of the summer term 2015. The school advertised twice before appointing a suitable replacement. The new deputy headteacher took up her post in January 2016. A number of staff left the school after the last inspection. Eight new teachers have been appointed since September 2015, six of whom are newly qualified. A new governor was appointed in March 2016. There are two remaining vacancies on the governing body.

Main findings

You have drawn on a range of expertise within the Redbridge and Lordshill Federation to support the leadership and management of the school during a challenging time of change. This helped you to build an effective team of teachers and senior leaders. Staff have embraced new initiatives put in place to help the school to improve. They share ideas and examples of good practice during professional development meetings. Those members of staff who are newly qualified feel well supported and this is helping to improve the quality of their practice quickly. They particularly appreciate the professional development provided by the federation.

Together with your senior leadership team, you have raised expectations about the quality of teaching and what pupils can achieve. You have been rigorous in rooting out inadequate teaching and securing the appointment of effective practitioners. Leaders have ensured that all staff are aware of what the school needs to do in order to become good.

Teaching and support staff benefit from good-quality coaching and training which have improved their practice and subject knowledge. They are now better at helping pupils to deepen their mathematical knowledge and skills, for example, in solving real-life problems. Senior leaders work effectively with class teachers to

support them with their planning. However, some teachers are still not pitching their lessons well enough to provide challenge for the most-able pupils or structured support to those of lower ability. Nevertheless, this is an improving picture, given that teachers now take greater responsibility for monitoring the progress made by their pupils.

Teachers now plan opportunities for pupils to write at length. Some teaching makes effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) to enable pupils to edit and improve their writing. A good example was the use of ICT by a pupil in Year 6 who produced an engaging account of the life of Nelson Mandela. Some pupils in Year 2 were observed using the internet to research information about William Shakespeare. This work fed into pupils' subsequent written work in which they used the past tense to report their findings.

Pupils take greater care about the presentation of their work. Consequently, the work in pupils' books across the school is neat and reflects an increasing level of pride in what they are learning.

Teachers identify key questions in their planning and, typically, use questioning to help deepen pupils' learning. However, not all teachers check pupils' learning and understanding rigorously enough during lessons. As a result, not all pupils progress as well as they could and some gaps in their learning are not filled quickly.

You are improving ways of checking on the progress pupils make in English and mathematics. This helps senior leaders to challenge teachers about the progress of their pupils and is contributing to raising standards. The pupils I spoke to during the learning walk confirmed that while they appreciate the feedback their teachers provide they do not always receive time to respond to their teachers' comments.

In 2015, the school met the floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils at the end of Year 6. At the end of the Reception year, more pupils reached a good level of development than in most schools. At the end of key stage 1, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were significantly below average. The progress pupils made between key stages 1 and 2 was broadly average in reading and mathematics, and was good in writing. There were no significant differences between the achievements of different groups in terms of their expected progress. However, fewer disadvantaged pupils achieved more-than-expected progress when compared to others.

Current rates of progress are better at key stage 1 than was the case last year. This is a result of stronger teaching in Years 1 and 2. Pupils at key stage 2 are not progressing as well as those at key stage 1. This includes pupils with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils. Furthermore, only a very small proportion are predicted to exceed age-related expectations by the end of Year 6 in 2016. This is partly due to a legacy of weak teaching that has left pupils across key stage 2 with gaps in their learning. Nevertheless, the evidence seen in pupils' books

shows that the quality of work in writing and mathematics is improving.

There is now an effective system to check on the progress that pupils make in reading at key stage 1. As a result, teachers in this part of the school have a good understanding of which pupils are on track to meet age-related expectations in reading by the end of Year 2. This has also resulted in additional challenge for the most-able pupils, resulting in them making good progress in reading.

School improvement plans focus appropriately on the key areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. Although they include a few measurable targets, these are not always specific or used well enough to identify different groups of pupils at risk of underachieving. Consequently, improvement planning is not being used as well as possible to drive improvement as rigorously and as rapidly as it could. Furthermore, the school's self-evaluation, although broadly accurate, does not fully reflect all of the priorities that leaders recognise are areas for improvement.

Governors challenge the school about the progress being made against the areas identified for improvement. They visit the school regularly to find out for themselves how well the school is progressing. They look at pupils' work and have started to question the progress that pupils make, such as in phonics (the sounds that letters make). However, they do not provide sufficient challenge to leaders about the progress made by different groups of pupils. They have also not ensured that key leadership documents fully reflect all of the school's priorities for improvement.

The school's safeguarding arrangements continue to be effective. The school has undertaken all of the appropriate checks on the suitability of new staff to work with children. Newly appointed staff have all been made aware of the school's safeguarding policy and know what to do should they have any concerns of a safeguarding nature. The pupils I spoke to from Year 6 told me they feel safe in school. They said that they can tell a member of staff if they have concerns and are confident that these would be dealt with appropriately.

External support

The local authority provides the school with regular and effective support. Leaders act on the recommendations provided to help improve the quality of teaching and learning. The impact of this is evident in the progress seen in pupils' books since the beginning of this academic year.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Southampton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier
Her Majesty's Inspector