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Ms Clare Butcher
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Dear Ms Butcher

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Red Hill Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 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 last section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders and members of the governing body. I also held a discussion with a senior officer from the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I met with the executive headteacher of the Pioneer Trust, who has also provided you with external support. I scrutinised a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, information about pupils' outcomes and documentation relating to safeguarding. I conducted a tour of the school with you and other senior leaders, during which we looked at pupils' work.

Context

Since the last inspection one of your deputy headteachers has left the school. One of your year group leaders has also stepped down from their leadership duties. You

have reorganised your leadership structure to account for these changes. External reviews of governance and the expenditure of pupil premium funding were commissioned and completed in October 2015. Governors have pressed on with plans to seek academy status and become part of the Pioneer Academy Trust. During this time the executive headteacher of the trust has provided you with support for leadership and management.

Main findings

Since the last inspection, your leadership team has sustained a sharp focus on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You have rightly placed a priority on tackling the development and improvement of teaching. Leaders are ensuring that prompt, effective support and challenge are provided to tackle the weaknesses which were evident at the time of the inspection. A well-considered programme of training for teachers has accompanied this work. You have made sure that your drive for improvement is conducted from within a culture of trust and collaboration. Expectations have risen and the motivation of staff has been sustained. Your plans for improvement reflect this and provide clear measures for success. Senior leaders evaluate the impact of their work with a much keener eye on how they are improving outcomes for pupils.

Governors expect and receive detailed analysis of how your work is improving provision. The external review of their work has helped them sharpen the questions they ask you about what difference leaders are making to pupils' progress. Governors have also taken steps to make sure the records of their work more accurately reflect what they do. Governors have grown more tenacious in pursuing lines of enquiry over time, for example in relation to the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

You have effectively created the conditions for leaders to grow their skills. Governors and those providing external support recognise how important this has been in moving the school forward. You have also seized opportunities presented by staff changes to strengthen the leadership team. In working on plans for improvement, leaders have not neglected the further development of the school's strengths. For example, you have successfully increased teachers' skills and knowledge of how to effectively tackle any instances of pupils' use of homophobic language.

Teaching has improved since the last inspection. The areas for improvement have been well tackled. Remaining inconsistencies are known and, where these exist, the quality of teaching is improving. Senior leaders are successful in orchestrating opportunities for teachers to learn from one another. As a result, pupils' progress is improving. Books are presented in a way which demonstrates improved attitudes to learning. Where the best teaching exists, pupils are fully immersed in their learning. They sustain interest and deepen their understanding over time. The most able are suitably challenged and motivated. Teachers now give more time and better guidance to help pupils improve. As a result, they know more precisely what they need to do when they return to their work. You correctly acknowledge that leaders must work to ensure that the consistency of these positive developments is

sustained and extended. The management of the performance of support staff has been sharpened so that they make a more effective contribution to pupils' achievement.

The teaching of reading and writing at key stage 2 has improved. This has led to more rapid progress for all groups, including the disadvantaged pupils. The pupil premium review has helped leaders and governors find ways of evaluating the impact of teaching on progress more promptly and effectively. They now determine how to spend the funding more wisely. Pupils receive timely, helpful support if they are at risk of falling behind with their learning and are catching up with their peers.

You have provided well-considered training and introduced more effective systems for teaching and assessing reading. Most-able pupils benefit from higher-quality reading materials and more challenging questioning from teachers. Pupils benefit from helpful advice aimed at improving their spelling and grammar. Teachers now insist that pupils follow up on their guidance in the next piece of work they attempt. Work seen in books also demonstrates that pupils are using writing more extensively to express their views and explore ideas in other subjects. This is enabling pupils to understand the importance of learning to write clearly and for a number of purposes. It is motivating most-able pupils to go into more depth. For example, older pupils enjoyed writing about who they thought was responsible for the death of King Duncan when studying *Macbeth*.

External support

The local authority has increased its support for the school since the last inspection. It understands the school's strengths and weaknesses well. The executive headteacher from the Pioneer Academy Trust has offered important assistance in challenging the process of school improvement planning and evaluation since his involvement began in February 2016.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wright
Her Majesty's Inspector