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Geoff Love
Hareside Primary School
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Dear Mr Love

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hareside Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 26 May 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 November 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:

- refine assessment systems to ensure that pupils' progress from their starting points can be measured with improved accuracy, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs or disability and the most able.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, the chair of the governing body, other members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan and I considered leaders' monitoring of the impact of actions against priorities. I visited classes with you to observe lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. I examined school tracking and

assessment information about pupils' progress and reviewed other documentation, such as the outcomes of recent checks on teaching and learning. I took the views of parents from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, into consideration.

Context

Some changes to the senior leadership team have taken place since the previous inspection. Both the mathematics and English subject leaders are now integral members of the senior leadership team.

Main findings

Evidence gathered during the monitoring inspection demonstrates that leaders and governors have made a positive start in tackling the priorities identified at the previous inspection. By restructuring the senior leadership team, for example, leaders now have greater capacity to capture more precisely developments in mathematics and English across the school. Beneficially, this is also affording both subject leaders increased opportunities to make a difference to their areas of responsibility.

The school's post-inspection improvement plan is clearly linked to the areas for improvement identified at the previous section 5 inspection. Improvement planning, however, needs to sharpen further as some aspects lack precision. You have not clearly defined the expected outcomes from their starting points for pupils with special educational needs or disability and for the most able pupils. Also, your evaluation of the impact of actions so far is not consistently tied to measurable improvements in teaching, learning and assessment.

Senior leaders have ensured that professional development and training for teaching staff have focused appropriately on those areas identified as requiring improvement. Questioning skills and the teaching and learning of phonics have consequently been targeted and worked upon. As a result, improved questioning skills are developing among staff. Adults and pupils are beginning to articulate the sounds that letters represent with better accuracy. In addition, a system for capturing the progress that pupils make within phonics has been introduced. Teachers are able to plan lessons more suited to pupils' needs within phonics and leaders are more able to hold teachers to account for pupils' outcomes in this area.

Action has been taken to develop and improve the leadership and management of special educational needs and disabilities. Documents such as the policy have been amended and now reflect more up-to-date guidance and information. The special educational needs coordinator is committed to undertaking further training and qualification in this area of responsibility to strengthen its leadership and management. However, the effect of actions on pupils' outcomes remains limited, as too much focus has been on systems rather than learning and outcomes. The

progress of pupils with special educational needs or disability from their different starting points is uncertain and not yet measured with accuracy.

Assessment procedures have been put in place to ensure pupils' achievements in key stage 1 and key stage 2 are able to be tracked more rigorously. Teachers use collated information to shape their planning in English and mathematics and are beginning to match tasks more closely to pupils' needs and abilities. Nevertheless, expectations remain too low for some groups, in particular, the most able pupils and those with special educational needs or disability.

Leaders and managers are aware that systems to measure the extent of progress made by all groups of pupils from their different starting points need additional work. Discussions and refinements are under way, but currently the measurement of pupils' progress continues to be imprecise.

External support

The school is drawing upon the support of the local authority. The local authority's school improvement partner and advisers have made regular visits and are providing valuable support and challenge to leaders and managers. This is validating the judgements and decisions of senior leaders in the school and is effectively shaping the development of subject leaders, particularly within English and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona Manuel
Her Majesty's Inspector