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Vyveanne Francis
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Dear Mrs Francis

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Willingham Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 7 July 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 December 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:

- use the progress information more forensically and consistently, so that there is no opportunity for pupils to fall behind
- identify and track the progress of the most able pupils throughout the school
- provide more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in a wide range of ways.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior and

middle leaders and members of the governing body. A meeting and a telephone conversation were held with representatives from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The post-inspection raising achievement plan was evaluated. I spent time in each class observing pupils' learning. I scrutinised the work pupils produce in their books to evaluate the progress pupils make over time, and spoke informally with pupils about their learning. The school's own information about pupils' progress was also considered. A range of documentation together with the school's own view of its performance was scrutinised. The school's processes and procedures for recruiting staff were analysed.

Context

There have been no significant changes in staffing since the last inspection. You have ensured that the school is fully staffed for the new academic year.

Main findings

Since the last inspection leaders have continued to raise the standards of pupils' achievement across the school. You have wasted no time in tackling the areas for improvement from the section 5 report and the drive and energy of leaders at all levels is clearly evident. Leaders are unwavering in their determination to put the needs of the pupils first. Staff and governors are supportive of school leaders' work and efforts. As a result, progress in school improvement is swift and sustained.

The post-inspection raising achievement plan is clearly linked to the areas of improvement highlighted in the section 5 report. It is well used by governors to hold leaders to account for its progress. Parents are regularly informed of the progress of school actions through the newsletters. Leaders consider there are currently no barriers to becoming at least good at the next inspection. Inspection evidence confirms this view.

Leaders ensure that teaching is consistently strong so that pupils can make rapid gains in their learning. In Year 1, for example, pupils have made fast progress over the year in writing. Their skill in writing about their recent trip to the seaside was of a high quality. Pupils were very pleased with their efforts and results. The work in the pupils' books demonstrates that over time they have received precise teaching so each individual has been able to excel.

There have been rapid improvements in personal development, behaviour and the welfare of pupils. Around the school, pupils' work in writing, mathematics, art and other subjects is celebrated through high-quality displays. This is helping pupils to develop an increased sense of pride in their environment. Consequently, they look after communal areas very well. At breaktimes, the school's use of some Year 6 pupils to resolve potential disagreements is effective. In a Year 6 exercise book, a pupil had explained that to hold this role of responsibility, pupils have to be fair and honest at all times.

Leaders have addressed the issues of low-level disruption in lessons through their positive use of 'reflection areas'. Pupils know how and why a pupil may need to reflect. The school has evidence to demonstrate that teachers are using the system well and fairly. It is having a positive effect on building relationships with adults and pupils that demonstrate mutual respect. During this inspection, pupils were actively engaged in their learning. They spoke easily and articulately about their lessons, enjoying the trips and additional experiences such as the Year 6 enterprise learning. No low-level disruption was seen in lessons.

Leaders continue to develop effective links with parents, for example through the learning champions system that is in place. The learning champions have received induction training from the school and are effectively used to support individuals with additional reading or mathematics learning. Everyone in the school community is involved in raising standards at Willingham Primary School.

The school's own assessment system, which was new at the time of the last inspection, is becoming more firmly established. Leaders and teachers are becoming more effective in identifying pupils who are in danger of falling behind. Staff are growing in confidence and skill in understanding the higher demands of the national curriculum and providing pupils with more stimulating and interesting opportunities. Adults have higher expectations of the pupils, who are rising to the challenge exceptionally well. Although the school is carefully tracking the progress of most groups of pupils, identifying the most able pupils remains an area for leaders to develop further.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well provided for. The leader ensures that the progress of each individual is carefully tracked and their support is thoughtfully considered. Consequently, these pupils are making secure gains in their progress and achievement from their starting points.

In the early years, adults are implementing the necessary actions to improve. Teachers in the early years are becoming more skilled at using assessment information to plan learning that excites and more closely matches the interests of the children. The deputy headteacher is relentless in her drive to raise the quality of teaching in the early years so that improvements in the quality of provision for the children are sustainable. Leaders have ensured that there are more opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills. Evidence from children's books and around the classroom shows this to be the case. As a result, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development this year has increased dramatically. Results are now above the national expectation for their age and children are better prepared for the challenges of Year 1.

The governing body ensures that the actions from the post-inspection raising achievement plan are fully in place. As a result, the school continues to move rapidly towards becoming a good or even better school. Through regular visits and checks, governors satisfy themselves that the information they receive from school

leaders is accurate. For example, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is rigorously checked to ensure that the additional government funds are used wisely and effectively. All leaders recognise that the achievement of this group remains a priority. Nevertheless, the school is making effective progress on this area for improvement from the last inspection report, and pupils are making better progress.

External support

The external support the school has received from the school improvement partner has been helpful in securing improvements. Where there have been additional challenges, the local authority has supported the difficult decisions that leaders have made, and fully validated these actions. The achievement of pupils in some year groups has been externally validated this year, and found to be accurate. School leaders value the support and guidance they receive from the local authority.

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

Yours sincerely

Kim Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector