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Mrs Fiona Toman
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Dear Mrs Toman

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Greatworth Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 1 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure a smooth and effective handover of leadership responsibilities for the new academic year, including the leadership of mathematics and the role of special educational needs coordinator
- develop the role of subject leaders so that they are well placed to improve the quality of teaching in their subject areas.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with: you; the chair, the former chair and vice-chair of the governing body; the subject leaders for mathematics and literacy; the senior teacher in her role as the special educational needs coordinator and the new headteacher who will be taking up her post in September 2016. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I toured the school, accompanied by you, visiting all classes and held informal conversations with staff and pupils. I also met formally with a group of pupils representing all year groups from Reception to Year 6. I evaluated a range of documentation, including the school's own achievement information and the single central record. I reviewed the school's website.

Context

Since the last inspection, you have resigned from your post. A new headteacher has been appointed and she will take up her post in September 2016. Four other members of staff, including the senior teacher, will be leaving the school at the end of this term. You are currently recruiting for a teacher for the Reception and Year 1 class.

Main findings

Leaders and governors gave immediate priority to improving pupils' attitudes to learning following the findings of the last inspection. This led to a major drive to ensure that pupils are clear on what is expected of them, and that teachers use the behaviour policy more consistently. You monitor this through more regular learning walks. Pupils are clear on what the policy is and that behaviour has improved as a result of their teachers using the rewards and consequences systems. However, they also describe some regular interruptions to their learning, as a result of others' poor behaviour. While the examples they give are instances of minor distractions, which reflect their own high standards and expectations of each other, they also speak about more disruptive behaviour happening on occasions. You are increasingly working with parents and outside agencies to provide the support that some pupils need to improve their engagement in lessons. The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View, the online Ofsted questionnaire, for this inspection, agree the school makes sure the pupils are well behaved.

The school's initial response and actions taken to address the areas for improvement from the last inspection lost some momentum between January 2016 and Easter 2016, with your and the governors' considerations about staffing and the decision of several members of staff to leave the school. However, since Easter your

endeavours have picked up again, and you have had more opportunity to spend valuable time in lessons to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. You rapidly became clear about the areas in which teachers and teaching assistants needed support and a boost of confidence, for example with strategies for behaviour management, and you have enabled them to improve these aspects of their work. You have raised your expectations that teachers routinely review pupils' progress during lessons and that they use this information to plan focus groups in later lessons. Focus groups led by teachers or teaching assistants help pupils catch up swiftly on any areas they found difficult in the previous lesson.

Teachers are using the marking and feedback policy more consistently. They focus more on pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling, using the 'punctuation push', and supported by informative displays and resources in classrooms. Teachers' have higher expectations for the presentation of pupils' work. Pupils have more time to improve their work in reflection time every morning.

You have introduced several effective initiatives to boost pupils' skills in mathematics and reading. Pupils say they enjoy mathematics and how the recent mathematics themed day was very motivating. It was striking how pupils from all year groups brought mathematics into their conversations when they met with me. For example, when talking about the behaviour policy, they did calculations to describe how the rewards and sanctions systems work. Pupils are also very clear about the different levels of reading books available to them and how they like to challenge themselves to move to the next stages.

Your systems for the tracking of progress in English and mathematics have become established. They are used very well by the special educational needs coordinator to identify pupils who need extra support. She carries out a detailed analysis of skills achieved by pupils and those in which they need a boost, and uses this to plan relevant interventions. The special educational needs coordinator meets regularly with classroom teachers to plan the support to be provided for each pupil, according to the very specific areas of literacy and numeracy in which they need help. Your termly progress-review meetings are now more focused, when you and the special educational needs coordinator also meet with each classroom teacher to carefully review the progress made by individual pupils. The school's own achievement information shows that pupils are making progress as a result of the interventions they receive, in and out of lessons.

You recognise rightly the vital role to be played by teaching assistants in supporting pupils to achieve the progress of which they are capable. You have organised important training for them, most recently on aspects of literacy, and numeracy training is to take place soon.

Subject coordinators have benefited greatly from their visits to a local school to meet others with the same role and share good practice. They have sound

strategies on how to develop their roles further and what they expect to see in teachers' routine planning. They have provided helpful guidance to their colleagues accordingly, for example, on how to incorporate more challenge and deepen pupils' thinking about more complex aspects of the curriculum. They are very clear on their responsibility to hold teachers to account for the quality of teaching in their subject areas. However, they have had few opportunities to visit other lessons since the last inspection. They have benefited from jointly observing each other's teaching, especially as they share the same class.

Members of the governing body meet regularly with members of staff in order to fulfil their responsibilities. The safeguarding governor reviews the single central record when any changes are made to ensure requirements are met. The chair of the governing body meets regularly with the special educational needs coordinator to review the systems for tracking pupils' achievement. Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and aspects needing further improvement. Their work to improve communications with parents is proving successful.

The single central record demonstrates that all required checks are made of staff.

The website was not compliant with Department of Education requirements at the start of the inspection, due to a technical difficulty. This was put right by the end of the inspection.

External support

The school has been well supported by the local authority, especially since Easter 2016, by facilitating your deployment to Greatworth on a full-time basis. The local authority has also supported you and other members of staff with monitoring the quality of teaching, moderation of assessments and organising a helpful link with another local school to support the leadership development of subject leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Carter-Fraser
Her Majesty's Inspector