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Mr Mark Geldard
Headteacher
Roe Lee Park Primary School
Emerald Avenue
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Lancashire
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Dear Mr Geldard

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Roe Lee Park Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 12 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 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 section 5 inspection in order to become a good school. The school should take further action to:

- review the school improvement plan so that it includes the most pressing action needed to ensure that the school is good at its next inspection
- make sure that planned actions are directly linked to the intended impact on pupils' outcomes
- ensure that monitoring and evaluation is robust so success can be celebrated and any slippage is quickly picked up and tackled.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection. I met with four members of the governing body, five subject leaders and a representative from the local

authority. I chatted with a group of six Year 5 pupils to gain their views on the school. You and your deputy headteacher accompanied me on a tour of the classrooms during which we looked at a variety of pupils' books. I looked at a sample of early years children's written work. I evaluated the school's improvement plan, records relating to pupils' achievement, your checks on the quality of teaching and looked at the minutes from governing body meetings.

Context

Since the previous inspection, there have been few changes in the school. A teacher from the Reception year is on long-term sickness leave. You have moved the teacher from Nursery to cover this class while the Nursery class is covered by existing staff. One new governor has been appointed to the governing body. On the day of this inspection, most Year 6 pupils were visiting their secondary schools.

Main findings

The findings from the November inspection were, although not totally unexpected, still a shock to you and members of the school community. Nevertheless, you, your staff and governors responded decisively. You met with parents to explain the inspection outcomes and reassured them that strong action would be taken to move the school to good as soon as possible. This calmed fears and you gained the respect of the parents, who are extremely supportive.

Together with governors and the local authority, you swiftly produced an action plan to guide all involved in tackling the weaknesses found at the inspection. Staff 'pinned their colours to the mast', showing their determination to make Roe Lee a good school and improve outcomes for all pupils. You work as a team and morale is much higher as you witness the dividends of your hard work.

You, your deputy headteacher and subject leaders for English and mathematics have successfully improved the quality of teaching and learning. You have been expertly supported by colleagues from the teaching school. You know the strengths of each member of your team and provided a programme of focused training activities, strengthening specific aspects of practice. You have shared the strong practice in the school with all teachers so that they can see what pupils at Roe Lee can achieve. Staff have visited other local schools to observe outstanding practice. The deputy headteacher has coached teachers to build their confidence, providing guidance on planning activities which are based on what pupils already know and understand. Teachers appreciate these training opportunities, resulting in improved confidence and raised expectations for themselves and their pupils. You notice that teachers are talking to each other more enthusiastically as they reflect on what works and what needs to improve in order for their pupils to make good progress.

You are reaping the benefits of this array of training activities as teachers' subject knowledge is deeper and pupils are learning faster. For example, during my visit I

noticed pupils persevering in solving problems by using reasoning techniques and appropriate resources as teachers used well-chosen questions to guide logical thinking. Similarly, I observed pupils reading carefully and understanding the plot. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that the work teachers set for them is increasingly matched to their levels of ability. Pupils consider that the work has got harder, challenges them to think and is fun.

Results of the 2016 tests and assessments for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 cannot be compared to previous years due to the change in the method of testing. However, unvalidated results show that about a quarter of pupils in Year 2 gained above the expected level in reading and mathematics. Likewise, higher than average proportions of pupils in Year 6 gained the expected level in reading and mathematics. Work in pupils' books and your own tracking points to a better picture for pupils in each class and in each subject as they make quicker progress.

Pupils' skills in writing are starting to gather momentum. Teachers' subject knowledge has strengthened so they are more competent at teaching writing. Daily grammar sessions provide intense learning and the use of check-up tests makes sure that pupils do not fall behind. A weekly spelling lesson extends pupils' vocabulary and reinforces familiar key words. Parents support pupils through the use of grammar books which are completed at home. All in all, this more systematic approach to teaching writing is enabling pupils to build their technical skills while offering creative opportunities to write in different subjects. This focus on developing basic skills has paid off, with a significant proportion of Year 6 pupils gaining above the expected standard in grammar, punctuation and spelling in the 2016 assessments. However, the proportions of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 gaining success in the writing assessment still fall short of the expected standard. Leaders recognise that to build pupils' resilience and creativity in writing, pupils need even more chances to write at length.

Through effective use of external advice from consultants, staff in the early years have created stimulating and attractive classrooms. Displays show that children's work is valued and this increases their self-esteem and confidence. Resources are arranged so that children can get to them readily and so extend their interests. Each area has opportunities for children to write and record their thinking. The outdoor area has been reorganised so again children have chances to extend their learning by using resources which interest them. Leaders acknowledge that there is still some work to do to include resources and experiences which will extend children's mathematical knowledge and skills. Staff get involved in activities and talk to children so that they can extend children's vocabulary. Children's books show that they are making good progress and most-able children are challenged.

You know that previous gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills built up from an early age and widened as pupils moved through the school. You have taken swift action to make sure that younger pupils do not start to fall behind. Outcomes for younger pupils are to be celebrated. Results at the end of the early years

foundation stage have increased by 10 percentage points this year, continuing the line of improvement. The scores for the checks on Year 1 pupils' understanding of sounds and letters have increased significantly so that they are in line with the 2015 average. These are improvements since the previous inspection and bode well for the future, as they are stronger foundations on which other teachers can build.

You are more robust than in the past at checking that ideas introduced are carried out in the classrooms. You introduced a system for assessment and tracking progress which gives you clear information on pupils' achievement. Consequently, you provide enhanced learning for most-able pupils and support those at risk of falling behind. You streamlined the array of programmes you used for support so that now you choose the exact support package to help an individual pupil. Through rigorous pupil progress meetings, checks on pupils' work, visits to classrooms, checks on planning and talking to pupils you have an accurate view of teaching. Teachers are in no doubt that they are held responsible for the progress of their pupils.

Several middle leaders received training from a neighbouring local authority officer on the role and responsibilities of a middle leader, which has clarified expectations. With the support of consultants and senior leaders, they have carried out checks on their subjects through visiting classrooms, checking pupils' work and talking to pupils. Consequently, they have a better understanding of the achievement of pupils in their subjects and what action needs to be taken next. They are ready to make a much stronger contribution to improvement and are enthusiastic about carrying this out.

You reviewed the school's marking policy. Pupils receive guidance on how to improve their work and appreciate comments and examples provided by teachers. A scrutiny of books on the learning walk we conducted showed several examples of such comments. Nevertheless, you want to refine it even more so that pupils can be given the appropriate feedback at the right time to help them to improve their work. Your Year 5 teacher led a small team to look at this aspect of the school's work. After researching other policies and discussing the rationale for marking, she has produced a policy to guide teachers in marking and giving feedback to pupils.

You, your staff and governors know what action is necessary to make sure that the school continues to improve. Planned action has guided school improvements so far. Now is the time to reflect on your successes and review the school improvement plan so that it includes the most pressing action needed to ensure that the school is good at its next inspection. Planned action needs to link directly to the effect it will have on pupils' outcomes. Similarly, the current plan lacks robust checks on planned action so you have no clear measure of the exact rate of progress the school is making towards good.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has supported you effectively by arranging very effective support from the local teaching school and a neighbouring local authority officer; conducting a check on the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make); a review of the quality of provision in the early years; and providing subject leaders of education to support and guide staff. The local authority officer has carried out termly checks on the improvement in the school. You have used this external support very effectively to make sure the school receives exactly what it needs.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Blackburn with Darwen.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Mulgrew
Senior Her Majesty's Inspector