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Peter McLean
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Dear Mr McLean

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wadworth Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 October 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 February 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in February 2016, the school was also judged to require improvement.

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:

- embed the processes for monitoring and evaluation carried out by school leaders and governors
- ensure that new assessment procedures lead to improved outcomes, particularly in reading at key stage 2.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school's action plans and other documents provided by the school were evaluated. We undertook short visits to lessons and looked at pupils' work in books.

Context

A new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) started in September 2016. A leadership restructure has been undertaken and the school is now fully staffed. The number of pupils on roll has decreased. As a result, pupils have been taught in mixed-age groups since September 2016.

Main findings

Following the last inspection, actions to address the areas for improvement were initially too slow. As a result, unvalidated outcomes for key stage 2 in 2016 do not show consistent improvement and outcomes in reading are not good enough. However, following the leadership team restructure and the appointment of a full staffing complement, school improvement has accelerated.

You and senior leaders now have clear action plans which address the areas for improvement. Helpful success criteria and regular planned checks to measure progress are included in the plan to help senior leaders and governors to evaluate the impact of their work. A clear timeline of actions allows you to ensure that actions have been completed on time. You have appropriately evaluated the impact of the work done so far. Consequently, there is evidence that teaching, learning and assessment are improving.

Evidence from our visits to lessons and the review of pupils' work in books demonstrates that in the majority of classes teachers' expectations have been raised. The most able pupils are therefore challenged and stretched to deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills. This is particularly evident in mathematics where the most able, including those who are disadvantaged, are being challenged by some highly demanding problems. For example, in the mathematics club for the most able, pupils are solving simultaneous equations. Pupils are encouraged to write creatively and extensively using good grammar, punctuation and spelling. Outcomes in the national phonics check have improved. Progress in mathematics and writing is improving. It is too soon to see the impact of the school's work to improve reading. You now have a good understanding of pupils' reading ability. You have increased the amount of reading in classrooms and the demands of the reading comprehension pupils are undertaking.

Marking and feedback have improved. Both teachers and pupils regularly mark work in line with the school's policy. Pupils enjoyed explaining to me the way they edit or correct work using their purple pens before the teachers mark the work and provide feedback. Pupils' response to feedback helps them to correct misconceptions and improve their work. The process encourages pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning. In some classes marking and feedback have a positive impact on progress.

A new curriculum and improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have resulted in greater engagement from pupils, the majority of whom could be seen enjoying their learning during the visits to lessons. The learning environment and the activities planned in the early years have improved. As a consequence, children are making better progress in writing.

The school is beginning to improve pupils' understanding and awareness of life in modern Britain through regular assemblies, which are shared with parents, and a recent election of school councillors. You recognise that more needs to be done to improve this aspect of pupils' learning.

Systems for the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress have improved. Teachers know what pupils need to do in order to make progress. The progress of pupils will be measured half termly. It is planned that teachers will be held to account at pupil progress meetings. The new SENCo has produced a detailed analysis to show which pupils need extra help to catch up. Such interventions are under way in reading, writing, handwriting, spelling and mathematics. It is too early to see the impact of these interventions or the new tracking systems.

Leadership and management are improving. Senior leaders have effective plans to carry out weekly monitoring and evaluation in English and mathematics, through visits to lessons, formal lesson observations and reviews of teachers' planning and pupils' work. As a result, leaders know where extra training and support are needed to help teachers improve. However, this work is at an early stage. Leaders recognise that the monitoring and evaluation must be rigorous and regular to bring about the required improvements. Training delivered in September 2016 has resulted in improvements in the teaching of writing, mathematics and spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Governors have a new procedure for holding senior leaders to account. You are required to provide evidence of the impact of the school's work to address the areas for improvement at monthly meetings. Governors also meet with pupils and staff. However, the discussions with pupils and staff are less focused on the areas for improvement. This procedure is just beginning and it is too soon to see the impact of this monitoring and evaluation.

External support

The local authority representative has supported you in writing your action plans and provided an electronic system for monitoring and evaluation to help you review the impact of actions taken to address the areas for improvement. Her work with senior leaders has helped them to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to undertake the evaluation of English and mathematics more rigorously. The local authority has also provided effective support for the new SENCo in developing her role. The local authority has contributed positively to the improvements in leadership and management and teaching, learning and assessment.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Lane

Her Majesty's Inspector