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Ms Gwyneth Evans
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Dear Ms Evans

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Stockingford Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 29 September 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 recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- improve outcomes in reading at the end of Year 6 by ensuring that pupils are taught the skills of reading with understanding more explicitly and are well prepared to meet the rigours of tests and assessments
- make sure that the difference in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and all other pupils nationally is diminishing more rapidly and that governors are holding leaders rigorously to account for how the pupil premium is spent
- investigate concerns raised by pupils during the visit about how the school responds to alleged incidents of bullying.

Evidence

During the inspection visit, meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, a representative from the local authority and three members of the governing body, including the chair. The school's improvement plan was evaluated along with assessment information for current pupils. A learning walk of lessons was carried out with you and a scrutiny of pupils' books was carried out. A check was made of the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Context

Since the last inspection, the number of pupils has continued to grow as the school is moving to four-form entry in every year group. There have been significant changes to leadership and teaching staff since the last inspection, including new leadership in early years, mathematics, reading, Year 2 and Year 4.

Main findings

You have acted swiftly to improve the quality of leadership and teaching in school. You have identified accurately where pupils have not made enough progress, for example in Year 2, and made changes accordingly, including a new year leader. In the most recent assessments at the end of key stage 1, outcomes for pupils were low in reading, writing and mathematics.

A number of staff are new to their roles. You recognise where variability in teaching still remains and are tackling this in the strategic deployment of senior leaders with specific year groups. You have also increased accountability for teachers by ensuring that leaders focus more closely on their monitoring of outcomes in each year group than previously. Year leaders are closely involved in monitoring teaching and most know the strengths and weaknesses in their year groups well. Others new to post are still developing their roles.

You also identified that last year there was too much variability in the accuracy of assessment. Consequently, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, did not do as well as anticipated in the most recent tests and assessments in Year 6, especially in reading where there was a big gap between predicted and actual results. Reading outcomes at the end of Year 2 were also lower than expected.

Pupils' written work in Year 6 was moderated in partnership with the local authority and other local schools. The same degree of rigour was not applied to moderating reading and mathematics, however. A revised assessment policy has been introduced and staff have been trained, especially in assessing reading which you acknowledge was previously weak.

Leaders and governors are now more engaged in checking the progress pupils are making and plans are in place to ensure that reading and mathematics are moderated externally as rigorously as writing. The process of moderation is set to

begin earlier compared to last year, from November 2016. Leaders hold teachers to account through half-termly pupil progress meetings where outcomes for different groups are closely scrutinised. Year leaders are not yet involved in these meetings.

Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school's outcomes well and why the school is not yet good. They are developing in their role to ask more challenging questions of leaders, especially through the performance and standards committee. They have also modified the role of link governors who are attached to specific subjects and have attended pupil progress meetings. They are reviewing the school's 'rapid improvement plan' termly. They have looked at pupils' books to evaluate the impact of the school's marking system. An external review of the expenditure of pupil premium funding has been carried out, but governors have not yet seen the outcome of this. They are not yet aware how disadvantaged pupils did in 2016 and whether the difference in outcomes compared to other pupils nationally is diminishing fast enough.

Outcomes in writing in the most recent assessments at the end of Year 6 were very high, both for pupils reaching the expected standard and for those working in greater depth. The successful outcomes reflect your long-term priority to improve writing, which was in place before the most recent inspection took place.

Changes in mathematics have been put in place more recently and therefore it is too early to see the impact of these in the latest test results. Outcomes were low at the end of Year 6 for pupils reaching the expected standard or achieving a high standard. A new scheme of work was put in place in 2016 and there is a new leader for mathematics who has only been in place for a month. However, pupils currently in school are benefiting from regular arithmetic sessions and 'fast maths' almost every day.

Pupils are gaining increased opportunities to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics right from when they start school in early years, where they are given problem-solving tasks to develop their independence. They are already making rapid gains at this early stage in the school year. Teachers have been given a key target through their training sessions to focus on pupil-reasoning. Pupils spoken to were highly positive about the 'fun and challenge' of mathematics lessons and wished that all their other lessons were like that.

Pupils also spoke favourably about the marking scheme, using different colours so that they take more responsibility for finding mistakes they have made and checking each other's work. They have time to respond to teachers' comments, which they find helpful. Pupils' books indicate that there have been improvements in written feedback but there is still some variation, especially where new teachers are getting used to the school's requirements.

The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception over time has continued to grow but you were aware that children's rates of progress were not consistently good in all areas. You responded swiftly by

putting new leadership in place from September. The early years environment has been transformed. Free-flow activities and topics have literacy and numeracy threaded through them so that children have early opportunities to develop these skills through play. Children now have a daily guided reading and mathematics lesson and have home-time mathematics work as well.

You know that the strong attention given to writing has led to a certain degree of 'taking the eye off the ball' for reading. That is why you have appointed an additional leader specifically for reading from September 2016 to support the leadership of English. You have looked carefully at the outcomes at the end of Year 6 and identified the need for teachers to enhance guided reading. You observed that pupils need to develop their ability to answer questions at pace and under pressure and that teachers need to ensure that pupils are taught the skills of understanding more explicitly.

During the visit, pupils behaved impeccably and were a credit to the school. However, in conversations, almost all of the pupils spoken to said that there was bullying in the school, but differed in their views as to whether it was occasional or frequent. They all agreed that the school needed to do more to tackle bullying effectively. They wanted to see more golden rules and more effective punishments.

External support

The local authority, together with external consultants, has been active in supporting and challenging the school. A review had been scheduled for the day of the inspection visit. External support has focused on developing and strengthening the capacity of leadership and management and providing support for moderation of writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector