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Mrs Sarah Tate
Althorpe and Keadby Primary School
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Dear Mrs Tate

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Althorpe and Keadby Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 December 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 March 2016. 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:

- raise the quality and consistency of teaching, assessment and the curriculum to be as effective as in the best practice by embedding successful strategies already in place.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, three representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school

improvement plan and spent time reviewing school documentation relating to performance management, pupil assessment information, local authority support and governance. I observed teaching and learning in all of the classes along with you or one of your senior leaders and we spoke to pupils and scrutinised their work.

Context

Since the previous inspection, one teacher has left the school and another class teacher was appointed. A temporary teacher is covering for a teacher on maternity leave.

Main findings

You demonstrate an ambitious vision to create an inclusive school where every child will succeed. The requires improvement judgement the school received at the previous inspection has made you determined to tackle teaching and learning with greater urgency. This has led to encouraging signs of improvement in a short time, with improved outcomes evident in 2016.

Governors have the necessary experience and expertise to undertake their roles and involve themselves fully in the life of the school. They challenge leaders about the improvements they are making and then visit the school to evaluate the impact of the changes. As a result, they are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have been instrumental in making strategic decisions designed to enable all pupils to succeed. They have sought the appropriate external support necessary to move the school forward more rapidly, resulting in improved outcomes in 2016. The latest school performance information is also indicating increased progress in most year groups. Where progress is not as strong, leaders have plans in place to address this.

The leadership team now have more clearly defined roles and responsibilities and this is bringing greater capacity for shared leadership across the school. Improved accountability, supported by more robust appraisal along with external training and support, is giving leaders and teachers the confidence and skills needed to bring about rapid change.

Leaders have improved arrangements for staff appraisal with targets linked to the governors' key priorities for the school. However, appraisal plans, particularly for teaching assistants, would benefit from a more detailed written record to reflect the quality and clarity of the verbal discussions which are now taking place.

Leaders are now clear which strategies need implementing and how to check the effectiveness of action taken. Leaders are also realistic about the barriers which have resulted in less progress with some aspects of their plan than others. The school improvement plan is a working document and is allowing leaders and governors to make adaptations where necessary, based on monitoring findings, to

enable success in all the areas for improvement. Leaders use the outcomes of monitoring effectively to shape whole-school staff training and specific development and support for individuals. As a result of the quality of their checking, leaders know each class well and are able to provide a tailored approach to supporting teachers. Leaders can show the impact of staff training through the subsequent work that pupils produce.

Governors have brokered the support of a local authority adviser, which has helped leaders and teachers place a greater emphasis on teaching and learning. Teachers regularly evaluate the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning and progress. They have a greater understanding of assessment information because the tracking system is helping them be more involved and better informed about pupil progress.

Published data indicates that progress overall and for disadvantaged pupils was significantly above average at key stage 2 in 2016. Pupils made good progress from all starting points and progress was particularly strong for pupils with low prior attainment who needed to catch up quicker. The school's own tracking and monitoring show that current pupils are making better than expected progress in almost every year group, which reflects the quality of work I saw in books and observed in lessons. Leaders must continue their focus on embedding the successful strategies they have introduced to achieve this accelerated progress throughout the whole school and across the curriculum.

Teachers use weekly assessment information to identify gaps in learning. They plan work which is meeting pupils' needs because it is accurately matched to their starting points and provides sufficient challenge for them to make as much progress as possible. Subject leaders are checking that pupils are making the rate of progress required. By looking closely at pupils' work, teachers are becoming more aware of the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. As a result, teachers have higher expectations and quickly adapt any less-effective teaching, which is starting to secure more rapid progress for pupils.

Teaching is becoming more consistent and of higher quality. In the most effective lessons observed, teachers' questions help them to check pupils' understanding. Pupils who have grasped the lesson content are able to challenge themselves and independently apply their learning in different contexts. This is encouraging all pupils, and especially the most able, to aim to reach the highest expectations and is becoming much more embedded across school, particularly in mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants generally use time wisely to identify and address any misconceptions so that pupils can make as much progress as possible. Where teaching is not as strong, pupils do not have enough opportunity to challenge themselves because questioning to establish each pupil's understanding is not effective enough. Although pupils have more opportunities to write at length, the use of scaffolds and prompts limits progress for some pupils. Leaders have identified this area in the next stage of their improvement programme.

You are aware that there is still some variability in the effectiveness of teaching assistants, but you can evidence the progress already made as a result of training identified through your monitoring and appraisal processes. The challenge for leaders will be to build on the achievements so far and to support every teaching assistant to become as effective as the most successful.

You acknowledge that there is still more to do in improving attendance and have plans in place to further reduce absence in the harder to reach cases.

At the time of the inspection the website was not compliant. However, following my discussion with you, governors and leaders made the required additions by the end of the day.

External support

The local authority has provided considerable support and challenge for the school since the last inspection. Advisory support has helped leaders and teachers to sharpen their focus on developing teaching and learning. In addition, termly progress meetings involving leaders, governors and local authority representatives ensure that leaders' actions are under regular and robust review. As a result of the positive signs of improvement seen in pupil outcomes, coupled with improving practice in teaching, the local authority plans to scale back its support. Leaders are now well equipped to sustain the improvements made so far and to drive further improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey

Her Majesty's Inspector