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9 February 2017

Paul Scragg
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Dear Mr Scragg

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Norbriggs Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 31 January 2017, 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 June 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At the section 5 inspection before the one that took place in June 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.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you and other senior leaders, two members of the governing body, a group of pupils and a representative of the local authority. I considered a range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan and the most recent information you hold on pupils' progress and attainment. We conducted a tour of the school together and visited all classes to see pupils and staff at work. I spoke with several parents at the beginning of the school day.

Context

Since the previous inspection, there have been no significant contextual changes.

Main findings

You and other senior leaders are creating a culture of higher expectations across the school that is shared by staff, pupils and governors. All staff know what the school's key priorities are, as well as their role in securing better achievement for pupils. As a result, improvement is taking place at a steady pace.

You have devised a school improvement plan that includes areas of the school identified as priorities from a wide range of documents, including the most recent inspection report. However, the plan is not focused sharply enough on the areas identified for improvement at the time of the previous inspection. You have agreed to amend and improve the quality of the plan by focusing on these key actions.

You are implementing a comprehensive programme of training and support for teachers and teaching assistants. Many teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve and plan interesting learning activities. As a result, teaching is improving and pupils are making better progress in many classes. For example, in the Reception class, children were writing simple sentences using finger spaces, capital letters and full stops. In Year 2, pupils were excited as they explained their mathematical reasoning using a range of attractive resources. In Year 6, all pupils were being taught the same concepts in algebra but appropriate challenge was provided through greater depth for most-able pupils. Despite these improvements, you know that teaching is not yet consistently good throughout the school and in a few classes pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable.

Pupils' mathematics books are beginning to reflect work at different levels of challenge, as well as increasing opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical reasoning through solving problems and explaining the strategies they have used. Teachers are providing pupils with a wider range of opportunities to become familiar with and read different types of text. They plan activities that develop pupils' understanding of what they read. Reading books are of good quality and pupils are developing more positive attitudes to reading. One pupil told me, 'I didn't used to like reading but now it is my favourite hobby'.

Pupils are starting to adopt better attitudes to learning. They are beginning to show greater perseverance and greater pride in their work. The quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation shows an improvement since the beginning of the academic year.

You are providing dedicated time for the English and mathematics subject leaders to observe staff teach, model best practice and identify targets for improvement. As a

result, they have a better understanding of their roles and accountability and the pace of improvement across the school is accelerating.

New, robust, systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress have been introduced and are becoming embedded. Assessment is becoming more accurate through the use of standardised tests, agreed criteria, moderation and effective training for all staff. Consequently, many teachers are beginning to use assessment information more effectively to pitch work at the correct level for individuals and groups. Nonetheless, you know that there is more to do to ensure that assessment consistently informs teachers' planning more precisely to address gaps and accelerate progress.

The governing body has acted swiftly to implement the recommendations following the review of governance. Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and are well informed about the work of the school. As a result, they are providing a rapidly increasing level of challenge and support and are able to influence school improvement effectively.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. Pupils I spoke with told me they felt happy and safe in school.

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

External support

The local authority's link adviser knows the school well and is committed to its development. He visits the school regularly to review progress, as well as to provide a range of training for staff and governors. He has recently established a new local schools network group, 'Staveley 5', which is providing further support to the leadership team, staff and governors.

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

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector