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Miss Victoria Kirkman
Acting Headteacher
Ripon, Greystone Community Primary School
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Dear Miss Kirkman

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ripon, Greystone Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 21 March 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in July 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in July 2015, 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you as the acting headteacher, other senior leaders, the governing body and representatives from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated and other documents reviewed. Meetings were held with a group of teachers and a higher level teaching assistant, the learning mentor and the attendance manager. The inspector also talked with pupils at playtime. Together we visited all classes at least once and jointly reviewed a sample of pupils' workbooks alongside the teachers' assessment information.

Context

The substantive headteacher has been absent from his post since September 2016. Since that time, you have led the school as acting headteacher. During your brief maternity leave in the autumn term, the school was led by a consultant headteacher from a local primary school.

There are currently two teachers on maternity leave.

Main findings

Since September, the governing body and local authority have empowered you to address the serious issues identified at the previous monitoring inspection, alongside the areas for improvement identified in July 2015. New systems for improving all aspects of the school, introduced following the previous monitoring inspection, have been strengthened. You are insistent that staff apply behaviour strategies and approaches to teaching, learning and assessment consistently. This single-mindedness is beginning to reap rewards.

From visits to lessons and discussions with pupils at playtime, it is clear that the nurture room, known as the 'hub', and the consistently applied traffic-light system are helping pupils to learn to manage their own behaviour. The younger pupils have responded particularly quickly to the consistent expectations. For example, when the den that children in early years had built unexpectedly fell down, they showed remarkable resilience and worked together on the rebuild. The older pupils are now more focused on learning and attentive to staff instructions. However, their personal organisation is not as strongly developed, for example not sitting smartly on chairs so they are in a good position for neat handwriting.

During the lively playtime, pupils were keen to talk about how their school is changing. They appreciate the skilful support provided by the learning mentor. This includes the help they get to sort things out when they fall out, and learn how to talk about their feelings during class circle times. These proactive and restorative approaches are securing sustainable change in pupils' behaviour.

Attendance is beginning to improve. The school's information shows that persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has decreased from autumn 2015 to autumn 2016.

You and your staff team have improved how you support pupils and their families facing difficult circumstances. Staff now ensure that they contact other services to ensure that the right people give the right support. Joint work with other services is helping to improve attendance and pupils' readiness to learn.

All teachers accept your accurate assessment that there is still variability in the

effectiveness of teaching. Teachers are now keen to accept the support offered to develop their practice. From brief visits to lessons, teachers ensure the pupils' desire to learn. Displays celebrate pupils' achievements and provide helpful support for their learning.

A small sample of pupils' books was reviewed, alongside the school's assessment information. Teachers' assessments are broadly in line with the school's assessment criteria. Crucially, this means that your evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching is accurate. As a result of improving teaching, an increasing proportion of pupils are making better progress than in 2016.

You and the governors know where pupils' learning is slower than it should be. This is apparent in writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar. You are not complacent and are developing a more accurate way of testing pupils' skills to identify specific gaps in knowledge so the correct interventions can be put in place. You are confident in the approach you are taking because a similar approach has improved the pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics.

Governors have a much tighter grip on the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement. A focused monitoring schedule that includes visits to classrooms has been introduced. This gives governors the information they need to ask probing questions and challenge where things are working and where they are not. Financial difficulties are being resolved through an agreed plan with the local authority. The previously poor use of the pupil premium funding is now being addressed. Leaders have developed a plan, which they regularly review. The plan identifies barriers to learning that pupils face and a range of different activities to support identified pupils to make better progress.

External support

Following the last monitoring inspection, the local authority commissioned support from the Ebor Teaching Schools Alliance. Ebor staff instigated the effective development of the school's approach to behaviour management. Since September 2016, you have ensured that support from the local authority is fully utilised. Support for leaders and training opportunities for all staff have contributed to the improvements in teaching and pupils' progress. Independent consultants have also provided effective support to your professional development.

You have also developed effective partnerships with other local primary schools to support the professional development of the teachers and other staff, including work with North Star Teaching School Alliance.

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 Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Hayter

Her Majesty's Inspector