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Ms Georgina Graham
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Graham

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Parkland Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 24 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 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 its 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 recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that all teachers have consistently high expectations for pupils' learning in all classes
- develop pupils' skills of reasoning in mathematics, particularly in key stage 2
- further implement plans to ensure that teachers' assessments are accurate against national age-related expectations
- continue work to improve attendance, particularly for the disadvantaged pupils.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, middle leaders, pupils, representatives from the governing body and the local authority school improvement partner. The focus of discussion was around the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I visited lessons with you and we scrutinised examples of pupils' work. A range of school documents were looked at, including those relating to attendance and safeguarding. The effectiveness of how leaders address parental concerns was considered.

Context

Since the last inspection a number of fundamental changes have taken place. The school is no longer part of a federation and the federation headteacher has left. You were the previous head of school and have been appointed as the headteacher since January 2017. In September 2017 the school will grow and become two-form entry, starting with an additional Reception class. The school has a history of high staff turnover. The deputy headteacher is leaving in the summer to take up a promotion, a teacher is retiring at Easter and another teacher is leaving to take up a different role. Recruitment is well under way for these posts, as well as for a new early years teacher to take up the additional post created by the move to two-form entry.

Main findings

There is a shared belief from leaders, staff and the local authority that after a period of substantial change, there is increasing stability. However, leaders are aware that much needs to be done to ensure that outcomes for pupils improve. Many pupils are still working below age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in lower key stage 2. Progress across pupils' time in school is variable, with a current picture of peaks and troughs in their performance. Leaders are working hard to secure consistently high-quality teaching to ensure that the progress pupils make is rapid and any differences between them and pupils nationally are diminished.

Teachers' assessments have not been accurate in the past. Leaders have now made sure that there are plentiful opportunities for teachers to work with staff in other schools and with the local authority to moderate examples of work. It is, however, too early to see the impact of this work.

In mathematics the focus on developing basic skills is seen in pupils' current work across school. In key stage 1 there are some examples of pupils starting to reason and apply their skills well, but this is very variable through key stage 2. Pupils find it hard to talk about their learning, which has an impact on developing explanations and reasoning skills across all aspects of the curriculum.

Work to improve pupils' progress in reading is starting to come through with better phonics skills applied in their reading and writing in key stage 1, and a developing understanding of the importance of and pleasure in reading. However, there is currently an inconsistency in the productivity during the daily reading time in class.

Behaviour in classrooms is improving. Generally pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and most pupils engage in their tasks. Times when pupils move from one activity to another around school, such as lunchtime, are more difficult and pupils talk about there still being incidents of bullying and issues with poor behaviour. Leaders' focus on developing pupils' personal and social skills is aiding improvement in this area.

In the early years, adults have introduced more opportunities for children to develop basic skills in the outdoor area. Writing in particular is high profile with a number of engaging activities inside and outside where children independently choose to write lists, recipes, stories, instructions and sentences about their learning.

Attendance is still below that of pupils nationally. Clear systems and procedures have been implemented and are starting to have an impact, with an improvement in attendance this term. Attendance for disadvantaged pupils is lower than that of other pupils and in the bottom 10% of pupils nationally. Staff are working with families and other agencies to improve this. Leaders are very aware that poor attendance has a negative impact on pupils' progress.

Work to create a more shared style of leadership has started well. Middle leaders are clear about their role in improving pupils' outcomes and have devised plans which they check against each week. They bring energy and positivity to the role. They are working with consultants and leaders in other schools to develop their own skills and practice as leaders.

The school improvement plan addresses key priorities. More detail about how these improvements will come about is in individual action plans. You agree that a closer alignment with the school's self-evaluation will make this planning even more precise, and easier for governors and staff to check progress against.

Leaders are devising a variety of ways to involve parents and carers in their child's learning and to communicate with them about the life of the school. This includes half-termly parent forums, learning workshops and regular invitations to join class assemblies. The new pastoral team works closely with pupils and families. Leaders have used carefully thought out questionnaires, focused on what parents would find most helpful. The school's website was under reconstruction at the time of the visit and making this accessible and informative for parents is a key priority.

Governors have a clear understanding of their role and the challenges that the

school has faced. They are clear in their view of improvements that have already been made and are focused on what still needs to be done. They make sure that they ask challenging questions and see first-hand the work of leaders and teachers in improving outcomes for pupils.

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

External support

The local authority has been considerably involved in the work of the school, through the de-federation, the consultation to become two-form entry, and the work focused on improving leadership and teaching and learning. Current involvement includes regular school improvement partner visits, specialist consultants supporting middle leaders and brokered school-to-school support from St John's CE Primary School.

Leaders and staff say that their work with a number of other schools and consultants is helping them to ensure greater consistency and a better understanding of national expectations and assessments. This varied external guidance is focusing on school improvement. There is a much better understanding of what needs to be done and how to make it happen.

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

Yours sincerely

Kate Rowley
Her Majesty's Inspector