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10 May 2017

Mrs Lisa Mole  
Headteacher  
John Hunt Primary School  
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Nottinghamshire  
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Dear Mrs Mole

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to John Hunt Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 27 April 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 November 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:

- Make better use of its pupil premium funding to work more extensively with parents of disadvantaged pupils whose attendance remains too low.
- Ensure that the governing body acts urgently upon the review of governance and uses a wider range of strategies to hold the school to account.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the two assistant headteachers, other senior leaders, subject leaders, four members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I considered a range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan, the latest self-evaluation of the school's performance, records relating to the safeguarding of pupils, assessment information, attendance information and minutes of meetings of the governing body. The assistant headteacher and I visited nine lessons across the school and I also met with pupils and looked at a sample of their work.

## **Context**

There have been a number of changes to staffing since the last inspection. Following on from your role as acting headteacher, you took up the post as permanent headteacher in January 2017. A job-share teacher left in April 2017. A newly qualified teacher is working in the school for the remainder of the year to cover a teacher who left in December 2016. Permanent teaching appointments have been made for September 2017 to provide a full complement of staff.

## **Main findings**

Your drive and vision for the school is clear and you are well supported by other senior leaders, who share your ambition to support pupils to achieve their best. You have considered the areas for improvement identified at the time of your last inspection, and taken swift and effective action to tackle the areas of priority. Improvement planning is focused and is linked to robust tracking of pupils' progress. As you acknowledge, leaders' self-evaluation of the school's work needs to be updated and more focused. Improvements to the leadership and management structure under your clear leadership provide a secure basis for the school to move forward.

You have developed the roles of subject leaders and have put into place a focused programme of training to support the professional development of staff. You have rightly made improving the quality of teaching and learning the central focus of the school's work.

Teachers are beginning to plan activities which challenge pupils more effectively than previously. Work in pupils' books, the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress, and evidence in lessons all show that teachers are developing higher expectations for pupils' progress. However, as you and other leaders are aware, this is not yet consistent. In some lessons, particularly in mathematics, work is not always challenging enough, particularly for the most able pupils. Recent actions to tackle this, for example staff training on promoting pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills, are beginning to have an impact. As you and

other leaders recognise, the many effective actions you are taking need more time to be fully effective.

A new phonics programme has been introduced in the early years and key stage 1 and this is improving standards in reading and writing. There is clear evidence of leaders' work to promote opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills across the curriculum. This was evident, for example, in work in the early years in which children had written mini-beast books.

In the early years, children's work and their learning journey documents show that clear progress has been made in developing children's letter formation and writing skills. Initiatives such as teaching children to rehearse their sentences orally before writing are helping them to extend their vocabulary and improve their speaking and listening skills. Many pupils, including the most able and those that are disadvantaged, produce work of a high standard.

The performance management of teachers is robust and teachers are held accountable for the progress of pupils. Where teaching is less strong, you and other senior leaders have put into place focused support to improve the quality of teaching. Current information about pupils' progress shows that the majority of pupils, including the most able and those that are disadvantaged, are making faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics than previously, and this is supported by work seen in their books.

Leaders have ensured that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is closely monitored. The impact of the school's use of pupil premium funding is not evaluated sharply enough, however, and you are aware of this issue. Attainment has improved and rates of progress are faster in many classes, but these are not yet consistent. Current information shows that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, including rates of persistent absence, has declined. A schoolwide illness caused a large number of pupil absences, which clearly affected overall attendance figures, but the attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains a priority for further improvement.

Leaders' work to improve pupils' learning behaviour has had a positive impact. Pupils are well behaved and apply themselves to their work. In some key stage 1 classes, however, pupils do not listen carefully enough. Actions to improve the presentation of pupils' work have been effective. The handwriting and presentation policies are being consistently applied and pupils show pride in their work. Pupils are very positive about their learning and their teachers. One pupil in key stage 2 said, 'Teachers try to get the best out of us'. Other pupils I spoke with made similar comments.

The quality of governance is not improving rapidly enough. Governors have supported the development of the new leadership structure and minutes of meetings show that governors challenge leaders. However, governors have not responded quickly enough in organising the external review of governance

recommended in the last inspection report. Governors rightly identify that they need to develop their monitoring role, but very few visits to the school have taken place since the last inspection to gain information about the work of the school. Governors have not been robust in ensuring that pupil premium funding is used effectively to tackle low attendance.

### **External support**

The school has received support from the local authority to develop the leadership structure and support improvement planning. The school is also working closely with another school in a Teaching School Alliance to support improvement planning.

This support has contributed to the rapid development of an effective leadership structure which is bringing about rapid improvements in most of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

John Lawson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**