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Mrs Emma Titchener
Interim Headteacher
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Derbyshire
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Dear Mrs Titchener

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Repton Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 17 May 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. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in November 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, subject leaders, the chair of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.

I visited most classrooms, looking at the pupils' work and discussing it with them. I held a meeting with a group of pupils. I looked at a range of documents, including the school's action plan, safeguarding records, behaviour and bullying logs, and the results of a recent school survey of parents' views.

Context

The school has been led by two interim headteachers jointly from January to March 2017. A new interim headteacher was appointed subsequently and had been in charge at the school for a few weeks prior to this inspection. There have been other changes in leadership responsibilities at the school as well.

Main findings

The initial interim headteachers set about quickly dealing with the areas for improvement identified at the inspection. By Easter 2017, all except one piece of the documentation that the school is required to have on its website was in place and the final piece, the pupil premium strategy, is now also in place.

The senior leaders and the governing body have made various improvements to communications with parents. Consequently, the level of satisfaction with the school among parents has increased since the inspection.

The interim headteachers revised and put in place new policies and procedures of reporting and recording incidents. A new behaviour policy is in place. The records of the few behaviour incidents are completed carefully. The pupils told me that the teachers deal effectively with minor misbehaviour. The school's safeguarding records are now organised appropriately. They contain relevant information and summaries to enable the school to manage cases effectively. The records show that the staff are completing the required forms to report a concern appropriately.

As the recently appointed new interim headteacher, you have set to work quickly and established a clear sense of direction for the improvement of the school. Several important developments are very recent and so are yet to realise their potential. There is, nevertheless, a clear sense of change and improvement at the school and an increase in the rate of development.

You have generated a sense of purpose among the leaders and a belief that the school can improve. You have put in place a programme of suitable and sufficiently frequent activities for the leaders to check on the quality of the school's work. The subject leaders know what is expected of them and feel that they are being supported and assisted to do their jobs. They are being given a range of opportunities for training and professional development, which they are finding useful.

The senior leaders have established clear and consistent expectations for the presentation of the pupils' work. I saw various examples of high-quality and very well presented work throughout the school. The pupils confirmed to me that the teachers encourage them to take care with presentation. They indicated also that the highest standards are not insisted upon routinely and that was apparent in their workbooks.

You have made changes to the way in which lower-attaining pupils are supported. The pupils feel well supported, even though the work is at an early stage of development. The pupils described to me particular things that the staff do which help them to understand the things about which they are learning and to complete their work successfully. They say that, mostly, they find the work challenging and sometimes difficult. They do not get enough help with very particular pieces of learning that they find difficult.

At the time of this inspection, long-term arrangements for the leadership of the school are not in place. The current arrangements are secure only for a few months more. I am aware that efforts are underway to deal with this matter. Nevertheless, I think that the biggest potential threat to the continued improvement of the school is a protracted process for resolving this matter. I shall, accordingly, recommend to Ofsted that I stay in contact with the school and, perhaps, visit again at a suitable time.

External support

The local authority has worked closely with the school to support the improvements in leadership and management. The support for the school that it has been able to obtain has put the school on track to make the improvements required as a result of the inspection in November 2016. You are ensuring that the school gets, in addition, access to and makes effective use of a range of other suitable external support.

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

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector