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Mrs Caroline Coates
Greenhill Primary School
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Dear Mrs Coates

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Greenhill Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 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 December 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 December 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- strengthen the capacity of senior and middle leaders to provide models of good teaching and to lead improvements in pupils' learning and progress
- ensure that leadership in the early years improves the consistency of children's learning in Reception
- improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment
- ensure that extra help for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has a measurable impact on their progress and attainment.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, senior and middle leaders, the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a consultant headteacher to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I conducted observations of lessons jointly with you and the consultant headteacher. I jointly scrutinised a sample of pupils' work with two assistant headteachers. I evaluated the school improvement plan and considered documents about the outcomes of monitoring activities, the impact of performance management and pupils' progress.

Context

You took up post as the new headteacher in September 2016. A new chair and vice-chair of the governing body were also appointed in September 2016. A special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has been appointed recently. A teacher left at Easter and a few other teachers will leave at the end of the summer term. The governing body is holding a consultation about a proposal for the school to join a multi-academy trust.

Main findings

You are providing strong leadership of teaching and learning. Your clear direction about what good teaching looks like has successfully raised the expectations of staff. As a result, you have begun to bring about necessary improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The clarity of what you expect from school leaders has galvanised them to sharpen their practice. With effective external support, you are developing senior leaders' skills in identifying weaknesses, taking action and monitoring and evaluation. At present, the senior leadership team is dependent on external support.

The governing body endorses the move away from an inward-looking and defensive culture. Governors and staff have adopted an outward-looking approach and are willing to learn from external reviews and from good practice in other schools. With external support, the governors have learned how to ask more challenging questions and to follow up issues more sharply with requests for clear actions and timescales. The governing body has led the proposed change to academy status and is carefully considering the options. The governing body recognises the need for improvement in the early years and in the impact of pupil premium funding.

Leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching and learning in the early years is consistent. Some play is not purposeful enough and some activities are not targeted sharply enough at improving children's skills, particularly in literacy and mathematics. Children leaving Reception have achieved average outcomes in recent years, but could do better.

The rigour of your performance management of staff has successfully conveyed

your high expectations of rapid improvement. Most staff have responded well and now welcome your clear direction about what they need to do to improve. Your precise feedback to leaders and staff and your clear instructions have led to prompt action. The weekly formal evaluation of each teacher's performance has led to improvements in the quality of marking and feedback, the learning environment and the quality of teaching. Many of the teaching and assessment strategies are at an early stage of implementation and are not always applied accurately and consistently.

Staff have benefited from the additional professional development in school and from visits to other schools. The displays in classrooms provide more explicit guidance for pupils to apply in their learning. More examples of pupils' work show the standards for others to emulate.

You have introduced 'novel study' to promote more regular and extended writing. Pupils are reading more challenging texts and are using aspects of texts as a model for their own writing. Some pupils were proud to show the amount and quality of their well-presented writing. Opportunities to apply their writing skills in different subjects are limited and this is an area you have identified for further development.

At key stage 1, evidence indicates that the standards in Year 2 are similar to those in 2016. Reading comprehension is currently a relative weakness. You have introduced a promising approach to reading in upper key stage 2. You have plans to develop your new reading strategy across both key stages.

In 2016, progress and attainment at the end of key stage 2 were below average. Teacher assessments indicate that key stage 2 outcomes will improve markedly in 2017. This is the result of teaching Year 6 as a single class instead of in a mixed-age group. You have used assessment more precisely to identify gaps in learning and more intensive support has helped to close these gaps. Year 6 pupils have had more practice in taking tests. Daily arithmetic tests are reinforcing pupils' basic skills in mathematics.

Disadvantaged pupils are lagging behind other pupils in most year groups. You are identifying these pupils more clearly in your planning and you are reviewing their progress more systematically. You are assessing pupils' needs more accurately and providing extra support more promptly, before or after a lesson. These strategies have not yet had an impact on the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

External support

You have deployed external support from local headteachers effectively to bring about an improvement in leadership. Senior leaders have responded well to skilful coaching by the consultant headteacher. Consequently, they are managing their teams more effectively. Developing middle leaders has been identified as the next priority. The recently appointed SENCo has received effective support from a local

headteacher. As a result, plans for improving this area of work are securely in place. The school is beginning to develop its approach to mastery in mathematics, with helpful guidance from another local school. This is a priority for development in the autumn term.

External reviews by the local authority have provided effective challenge. The local authority is monitoring school performance closely. It has brokered effective additional support to develop leaders and governors. The local authority remains closely involved in coordinating the support, monitoring its impact and in judging when it will be right to withdraw additional 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 Sheffield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell
Her Majesty's Inspector