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Mrs Sarah Coxell
Fox Hill Primary School
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Dear Mrs Coxell

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Fox Hill Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 6 June 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 April 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 April 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:

- plan exactly how pupils who have fallen behind will catch up to the expected standard and ensure that pupils make at least expected progress over time
- check whether the actions they are taking to improve the school are bringing the intended impact
- ensure that governors hold leaders to account for the progress and outcomes of groups, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other leaders, two members of the governing body including the chair, and a representative from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. With you, I visited classrooms to observe teaching and learning, considered pupils' work and evaluated documentation regarding the school's effectiveness.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the early years leader and a teacher have left and one member of staff is on maternity leave. One of the co-chairs of the governing body has left and the other co-chair has taken over the full role.

Main findings

You have responded to the previous inspection with determination, commitment and passion to improve the school. You have ensured that the school continues to provide the same nurturing and supportive environment, while increasing the rate of improvement in pupils' learning and progress.

Middle leaders have been appointed and you are working effectively with them to develop their skills so that they can support your work to improve the school. Leaders in the early years, English and mathematics have taken useful action to raise pupils' outcomes in their areas of responsibility. They know and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the whole school, as well as those in their subjects.

Reading is improving. With you, the English leader has made a number of useful changes which have brought about improvements in reading in some classes. The newly furnished library and recently purchased books have motivated pupils so that many more now enjoy reading. You are successfully engaging parents in supporting pupils with reading. For example, the 'books and breakfast day' was extremely popular. Pupils and parents read together over breakfast, which was provided by the school. The recent introduction of a new whole-class approach to teaching reading is helping pupils to develop their skills of decoding, retrieving information and inference, so that many pupils are making better rates of progress. However, leaders do not check consistently that pupils in all classes are doing better.

The early years provision is improving. The early years leader has worked effectively with teaching assistants to ensure that they provide the right support to children. The newly refurbished early years classroom provides an attractive and well-organised setting so that children can choose their resources and work independently. Children enjoy learning and are making good progress.

Leaders' work to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils continues to be a focus. Teachers and teaching assistants know which pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding, and they consider carefully what needs to be done to ensure that they fulfil their potential. Although differences between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally are reducing, these pupils still do not do as well as they should.

Leaders analyse pupils' progress information and identify where individuals are not doing as well as they should. However, leaders miss opportunities to recognise where classes or groups are not doing as well as they should be. Leaders check teaching regularly, both formally and informally. The information they record is useful and their evaluations of teaching over time are broadly accurate, but they do not consistently take account of the progress that pupils are making when considering whether teachers are effective.

Teachers have a better understanding of what pupils know and can do, so lessons are more precisely targeted to pupils' needs. The changes to planning have enabled teachers to be more reflective and responsive about what is and is not helping pupils to learn. However, teaching still does not meet the needs of the most able pupils well enough. The percentage of pupils who are working at greater depth is improving but still is not in line with other schools across the country.

Work to improve pupils' handwriting and presentation has made a difference in many classes. Where this is not the case, leaders are working with teachers to ensure that this is resolved.

Governors have a better understanding of their responsibilities and are clearer about how they should be holding leaders to account. They ask a range of questions and have a good understanding about groups of pupils who are not doing as well as they should be, for example disadvantaged pupils and the most able. However, they do not robustly challenge leaders about why this is the case and what is being done about it. Recently appointed governors, with useful skills and experience, are helping to strengthen the governing body further.

Documentation to support school improvement is detailed and appropriate. However, the information which identifies what school leaders are hoping to achieve is not specific or measurable, so it is not always clear if the intended outcome has been effective.

External support

Leaders have made good use of the effective support offered by the local authority. Training, modelled lessons and advice are provided by advisers on a timely basis. The recent review of the use of the pupil premium funding, undertaken by the local authority, made a number of helpful recommendations, but leaders' and governors' work to implement the necessary changes is in the early stages. The local authority rightly identifies that leaders are driving improvements in the school. Continued support from advisers will be necessary to ensure that leaders focus sharply on the impact of their actions.

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

Yours sincerely

Louise Adams
Her Majesty's Inspector