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26 September 2017

Mrs Sarah Williams
Acting Headteacher
Oakfield Primary School
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Dear Mrs Williams

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Oakfield Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 12 September 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:

- fully implement plans to improve the quality of teaching and the outcomes achieved by pupils in Years 1 and 2
- strengthen the plan for improving the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils by adding clear, step-by-step targets and impact measures to this plan.

Evidence

During the inspection, I had meetings with the acting headteacher, senior leaders, eight representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with the headteacher of Frederick Gough School, which is federated with Oakfield Primary School. I visited lessons with senior leaders, talked to pupils and looked at the work in their books and folders. I evaluated the school's action plan and looked at a range of documents relating to self-evaluation, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Context

Since the last inspection, the headteacher has left the school. Five teachers have been appointed and the deputy headteacher is currently the acting headteacher.

Main findings

The headteacher and governors responded too slowly to the findings of the school's last section 5 inspection. The local authority issued a warning notice to the governing body in November 2016 as a result of concerns about the effectiveness of leadership and management and the pace of improvement at the school. However, since her appointment in November 2016, the acting headteacher has tackled the areas requiring improvement with determination and resolve. Senior leaders are a strong, cohesive and increasingly effective team and governors are making a more influential contribution to the school's leadership and management.

This purposeful drive is leading to improvement in the curriculum, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and, importantly, to pupils' learning and the progress they are making. The outcomes achieved by Year 6 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics in 2017 improved significantly. A higher proportion of Year 6 pupils achieved and exceeded the expected standards in these subjects in the end-of-key-stage assessments. Crucially, however, the outcomes achieved by Year 2 pupils declined in 2017 and fewer Year 1 pupils achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check. Although leaders have clear and ambitious plans, much remains to be done to secure high-quality teaching and strong progress in these vitally important school years.

Importantly, the acting headteacher, senior leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas needing further work. Following a period of uncertainty and instability, the key stage 1 class groups have been reorganised and three new teachers have been appointed permanently to the key stage 1 team. In addition, an experienced senior leader now has responsibility for key stage 1. The impact of this stronger and more focused approach to improving the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment can already be seen in the Year 1 and Year 2 classes. However, there is still much to do.

There have been significant changes to the governing body since the last inspection. An external review of governance was commissioned following this inspection and the recommendations have been used to strengthen the work of the governing body. Individual governors are bringing new knowledge and skills and collectively governors now have a deeper understanding of key areas of the school's work. The governing body is working in a more structured and systematic way and governors are providing stronger support and greater challenge. This increased accountability is valued by the acting headteacher and senior leaders. Importantly, governors have a clear plan for recruiting a permanent headteacher and senior leadership team. There can be no delay in making high-quality appointments to these leadership posts.

Senior leaders have a clear picture of the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils. They have clear and well-thought-out plans for tackling the barriers this group of pupils experience and for improving their learning and progress. Some of the targets in these plans could be sharper and more measurable. This will help senior leaders and governors to check whether the actions they take are making the difference they intend. Crucially, senior leaders are alert to the things that make pupils vulnerable. There are strong systems for identifying pupils who are at risk and leaders work closely with other services to provide the help and protection pupils and their families need.

External support

The external support provided and brokered by the local authority has added significantly to the pace of improvement at Oakfield Primary School. The local authority, rightly, used its statutory powers to warn the governing body about its serious concerns about the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management. This action, together with the effective support provided by the local authority and the headteacher of Frederick Gough School, have helped the acting headteacher and senior leaders to re-focus their plans and tackle the school's remaining weaknesses with greater urgency and more confidence. As a result, the school is in a stronger position to move to good at its next section 5 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 North Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nick Whittaker
Her Majesty's Inspector