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Mrs Catherine Morley
Executive Headteacher
Enborne CofE Primary School
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Dear Mrs Morley

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Enborne CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 October 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 September 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 recent section 5 inspection in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- sustain improvements in teaching, learning and leadership, so that pupils become more self-reliant learners and achieve increasingly secure outcomes over time.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator, a representative of the local authority, and groups of pupils, staff and governors, to discuss actions and improvements since the last inspection. I

evaluated the school's improvement plans and reviewed a range of documentation from the website and provided by leaders. Together, we visited classrooms to observe learning and look at pupils' work. I also considered responses to a recent parent questionnaire issued by school leaders.

Context

The temporary leadership arrangements that were put in place shortly before the last inspection are now permanent. The 'soft federation' between Enborne and Theale primary schools is overseen by you as executive headteacher across both schools. The acting deputy headteacher has moved on to a position in another school. The head of school took up his post in September 2017. The special educational needs coordinator has been formally supporting the school since around the time of the last inspection. One teacher has increased her working hours, one has left the school and another has joined it. Almost all of the teaching assistants have joined the school since the last inspection. A number of subject-specialist teachers from Theale Primary School work part time at the school to support delivery of the wider curriculum.

Main findings

After a challenging and turbulent time in the history of the school, you provide effective and stable leadership that is valued across the school community. Your expertise and experience is complemented well by your senior colleagues, and appreciated by your staff. The head of school, who only recently took up his post, is building purposefully on the successful work carried out by you and the acting deputy headteacher last year. As a result, there are notable improvements to the quality of provision across the school, which are leading to better outcomes for pupils over time.

Leaders know the school well, and identify accurately the priorities for ongoing development. You have established appropriately paced momentum that has ensured staff are united in their desire and determination to make sure the school becomes increasingly effective. Development plans are detailed and link carefully and closely to those areas of the school that need to improve most rapidly. They provide a helpful benchmark against which leaders and governors can check on the progress the school is making towards becoming good.

Governors have worked fastidiously to secure the leadership of the school. With the support of the local authority, they ensured that decisions made about the long-term leadership of the school were the right ones to support ongoing improvement. Governors are suitably skilled and experienced, and work proactively to ensure that governing body vacancies are filled by people with appropriately complementary skills. They are well informed about the work of the school, and thoughtful about how they can make sure they have the information they need to be able to hold leaders effectively to account.

Since the last inspection, much work has been done to make sure teaching is consistently effective. Teachers recognise the clear links between curriculum and assessment that are now in place. This helps them to plan work that builds increasingly successfully on pupils' prior learning across the range of needs. During my visit I saw evidence of how layers of challenge and support are built into learning activities in lessons, so that pupils can work at levels that are appropriate to their age and ability. Staff welcome and value the many opportunities to share ideas informally that working in a small school provides. Along with useful training and work with colleagues from Theale, this is supporting ongoing improvements to the quality of teaching over time.

A creative approach to staffing is helping to ensure that pupils enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum. Subject specialists from Theale provide high-quality learning experiences for pupils across a broad range of subjects, while enabling Enborne staff to strengthen their expertise in delivering high-quality teaching in mathematics and English. The newly introduced life-skills programme is enriching learning about equality and discrimination. This programme is in its early stages, but shows a commitment by leaders to ensure pupils' learning is suitably broad. Pupils relish the opportunities arising from the forest school, from clubs, and from activities such as performing at the Corn Exchange, that develop their confidence and problem-solving skills. This supports the work leaders were able to share that showed increasing opportunities for pupils to apply mathematical thinking to everyday contexts during lessons, although this was not something pupils recognised readily.

The special educational needs coordinator brings a wealth of expertise to her role. She has ensured effective systems are in place to identify pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. She works closely with staff to help them to meet the needs of the pupils in their class who need additional support in order to make rapid progress. This work is leading to improved outcomes for this group of pupils, but will remain a focus so that pupils are prepared as well as they can be for the rigours of secondary school learning.

Leaders use funding appropriately to support the very small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school. They check carefully the difference this work makes to pupils' achievements, changing their approach if strategies prove ineffective. Leaders recognise that the disadvantaged pupils in the school, many of whom have additional learning needs, must sustain their rapid progress in order to catch up with other pupils nationally.

The securely established assessment system enables leaders to track pupils' attainment and progress carefully from their starting points. Leaders make effective use of this information to hold teachers to account for the difference their work is making to pupils' achievements. Evidence shows that pupils' outcomes are strong and improving as a result of the more consistently effective teaching they experience. In 2017, outcomes across a range of measures are much improved on 2016, and are above 2016 national figures. However, leaders recognise where progress and

achievement are not as secure as they would like, for example in Years 4 and 5. Leaders are focusing carefully on how to ensure that these children make rapid progress that will ensure they are prepared well for secondary school.

Pupils enjoy their learning, and most feel it challenges them appropriately. They are polite and welcoming, and work and play well together. They talk proudly about how their school has improved, and how they feel their learning experience is better. They value the kindness and permanence of their new leaders, and how well adults care for them. In lessons, pupils behave well and follow instructions, although some give up quickly if they get stuck, rather than persevering or actively seeking support. Although systems are in place to help pupils identify their next steps in learning, pupils do not consistently understand what they need to do to improve further.

External support

The local authority has played a key role in securing the school's long-term leadership through the formal partnership with Theale Primary School. The school improvement adviser has worked closely with governors through a challenging and turbulent period to support them in establishing the most effective leadership model for the school. The collaboration between the two schools has led to rich opportunities for staff at Enborne to access high-quality training via their close-working links with colleagues at Theale. Staff value this highly, and can identify how it helps them to improve the effectiveness of their work. School leaders are proactive in seeking additional support from the local authority where it is needed to maintain the pace of improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Moles
Her Majesty's Inspector