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Lucy Stancliffe
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Dear Mrs Stancliffe

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hetts Lane Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 18 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 February 2017. 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:

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that all staff understand how to plan to meet the different needs of pupils
 - sharing good practice throughout the school
 - holding underperforming staff to closer account.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and held telephone discussions with the chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I met with a group of pupils formally and spoke to other pupils in their lessons. We visited all classes and discussed the strengths and weaknesses observed. I scrutinised a sample of pupils' work to evaluate the quality of their learning. The school improvement plan was evaluated and I looked at a variety of other documentation to assess the impact of the school's work since the last inspection. I also reviewed records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Context

There have been no changes to the leadership of the school since the last inspection. Two new governors have been recruited to the governing body.

Main findings

You have maintained the strengths identified at the last inspection. There is a culture of care and inclusivity in the school. Staff have high aspirations for pupils' success and pupils are keen to meet these. They enjoy their learning and want to do well. You are keen to develop pupils' experiences and to raise their aspirations. For example, at the time of the visit, pupils were excitedly preparing for an excursion to a wildlife park the next day and were looking forward to the new experiences that this would provide.

You have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Immediately following the last inspection, you evaluated the findings and worked with staff to write an action plan to address the areas needing improvement. You ensured that all staff contributed to the development of the action plan so that everyone understood the school's aims and the means by which to achieve them. The action plan is thorough and detailed, covering all necessary aspects of school improvement, with clear actions and timescales identified. There is, rightly, an emphasis on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment throughout the school. You have built in structures to evaluate the school's work to ensure that all work is focused, clear and relevant. Regular review means that all those involved are kept informed of the school's progress and maintain a clear focus on improvements.

You recognise the need to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment throughout the school. Following the last inspection, you made the decision to restructure the teaching teams to ensure that the strongest teachers were dispersed throughout the school. You have ensured that teaching teams plan together, sharing expertise and supporting each other. For example, teachers observe each other delivering the lessons that they have planned together, then discuss the

differences and identify specific aspects of good practice. You have shared the expectation that teachers explicitly identify how work is matched to pupils' different needs and you monitor this through lesson observations and work scrutinies. There is evidence of teachers giving greater consideration to pupils' different abilities and needs when planning work but this remains a priority. You recognise that inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain and have identified areas of weakness. You are aware of the need to improve the quality of teaching so that all teaching is at least good and to challenge underperforming staff accordingly.

You have taken effective action to develop the role of subject leaders, ensuring that expertise is not restricted to English and mathematics but is developed in all subjects across the curriculum. Together with senior leaders, you supported subject leaders to create written policy statements for each subject. This has increased staff understanding of subject-specific requirements and age-related expectations. This, in turn, has meant that teachers have a more accurate understanding of assessment in different subjects. Teachers have also participated in moderation activities, both in school and with staff from other schools. As a result of this work, teachers are now able to plan more effectively to meet the needs of pupils. Alongside this, subject leaders are better placed to monitor the quality of provision in the subjects for which they are responsible. A staff training event to further develop subject leaders' monitoring roles is planned for next half term. Although there has been considerable work undertaken, it is too early to assess the impact on pupils' progress. You are aware of the need to monitor this closely.

You have reviewed the curriculum to ensure that pupils are given sufficient opportunities to write at length and to investigate scientifically. You have introduced the expectation that pupils will produce extended pieces of writing more frequently than in the past. Such activity is closely linked to pupils' work in literacy and specific requirements are appropriate to pupils' differing abilities. Pupils are supported to achieve at the highest possible level through clear success criteria. Following the inspection, you reallocated the leadership of science provision. Leaders have introduced a 'science investigation day', the first of which took place in the summer term. Pupils and staff dressed up and participated in hands-on practical activities to develop their investigative skills. The science curriculum has also been amended to ensure that there are ample opportunities for pupils to explore and investigate. Work in pupils' books clearly shows a structured approach to investigation and the pupils that I spoke with excitedly related their experiments with bubbles and honey. You monitor these developments through your weekly Friday afternoon meetings with a sample of pupils, who bring their books to show you and celebrate their work. You also use this activity to provide feedback to subject leaders and teachers.

Following the last inspection, you took swift and effective action to improve the presentation of pupils' work. You introduced a 'brilliance in books' policy which clearly communicates high expectations of presentation in all aspects of pupils' work. Pupils have a very clear understanding of these expectations, recognise their value and are eager to meet them. You have also given consideration to the

resources pupils use. For example, you have ensured that the spaces or squares in pupils' workbooks are appropriately sized for their needs. The presentation of work in pupils' books has improved considerably since the introduction of this policy.

You have shared raised expectations of pupils' attendance with pupils and parents. The importance of regular attendance is highlighted in classes and assemblies and via the school newsletter. You also raise your concerns about individual pupils' attendance with parents. Governors recognise their responsibility in challenging the parents of those who do not attend regularly. Since the last inspection, attendance has been incorporated into other aspects of the school's work. For example, it is considered as part of the annual review of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils understand the importance of attending regularly and recognise that failing to do so can have a negative impact on their learning. Since the last inspection, attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, has improved. However, it remains below national averages and thus remains a priority.

Following the last inspection, you reviewed the school's behaviour policy. You agreed a set of minimum expectations with staff to ensure that all were committed to following and meeting routines and standards. Alongside this work, you ensured that staff were trained to have the skills and strategies to effectively support pupils to manage their own behaviour. You monitor incidents of poor behaviour closely and intervene with support and sanctions appropriately. The emphasis is on identifying the reasons for poor behaviour and putting support in place where required. Pupils understand and respect your expectations. They are clear about consequences should they fail to meet them and are keen to respond well and demonstrate positive behaviour in lessons and around school. Pupils say that behaviour in lessons is good. When we visited classes, we did not observe any low-level disruption. You recognise that, when this does happen, it is as a result of weaker teaching.

Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Meetings are well attended and discussions focus appropriately on school improvement. Governors have the skills and knowledge to hold leaders to account.

The last inspection recommended a review of the school's use of the pupil premium to assess how this aspect of the school's work could be improved. You commissioned a review immediately following the inspection but it has taken some time to arrange for it to take place. The review was completed the day before the monitoring visit and, as such, full details of the recommendations were not yet available. However, you are clear about what action needs to be taken to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, which remain below national averages.

External support

The local authority has provided effective support since the last inspection. For example, a school improvement adviser visits regularly to undertake focused work to support improvements. She has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provides appropriate support and challenge. You have also commissioned a specialist leader of education to support developments in teaching and learning. For example, she has worked with staff to develop effective classroom environments and the modelling of good practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Deborah Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector