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Mrs Jo Potts
Barnburgh Primary School
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Dear Mrs Potts

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Barnburgh Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 13 November 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 October 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 October 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 for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- develop the new teaching team and the impact of middle leadership so that pupils make faster progress to enable an increasing proportion to reach and exceed the expected standards by the end of each key stage.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with senior leaders, the governing body, a representative from the local authority and a local leader of education to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan

and spent time reviewing school documentation relating to: performance management; pupil assessment information; monitoring of teaching and learning; and governance. I observed teaching and learning with you and the deputy headteacher in all of the classes and we spoke to pupils and scrutinised their work. I also reviewed the checks that are made on the suitability of adults to work with children.

Context

There have been considerable changes to teaching staff since the last inspection. Four teachers, 50% of the teaching staff, joined the school in September 2017. Two of the new teachers are newly qualified. The deputy headteacher was acting deputy headteacher at the time of the last inspection and has now been appointed to the substantive role on a permanent basis. The governing body has been restructured and currently has some vacancies.

Main findings

You had just begun your headship at the school at the time of the last inspection and have responded with urgency and sheer determination to address the areas for improvement which were identified. While there are many encouraging signs of improvement, you are aware of the task still ahead and in particular the need to quickly develop the teaching team, many of whom are new to the school. The turbulence in staffing has hindered the pace of improvement somewhat. However, the effective systems and procedures you have implemented are successful in identifying teachers' strengths and areas for development. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving. You are aware that it is a priority to quickly develop the impact of middle leaders on improving the quality of teaching so that pupils' outcomes improve at a faster pace to enable an increasing proportion to reach and exceed the expected standards at the end of each key stage.

You have instilled a culture of high expectations for pupils' behaviour and learning and a clear and shared vision is evident throughout the school. Leaders and governors now have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have a thorough and detailed plan in place to address the areas for development. Ambitious targets have been set and clear milestones help leaders to regularly check the impact of actions taken.

Leaders have introduced more rigour in their tracking of assessment information. This has resulted in leaders and teachers having a much more secure understanding of each pupil's next steps and whether they are making enough progress based on their starting point at the end of the last key stage. Leaders also have a better view of the progress made by groups of pupils. In particular, the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils who access pupil premium funding is now much more closely scrutinised. As a result, teachers are more accountable for the progress made by these pupils. Leaders were quick to respond to the

recommendations from the review of pupil premium funding. Regular meetings to review the progress of all pupils, with a focus on the disadvantaged group, are identifying specific targets and additional support to address any gaps in pupils' learning and bring about more rapid progress. While attainment for disadvantaged pupils still varies in some year groups and subjects, pupils are making better progress. In the small number of situations where this is not the case, leaders have plans in place to address this.

An external review of governance, followed by another visit to check the impact of the actions identified, has been carried out. Governors have been quick to respond to recommendations and governance is becoming a strength of the school. A governors' action plan, used as a working document, is regularly reviewed by governors and ensures that findings are incorporated into the school's improvement planning process. Governors are also increasing their planned visits to school. Through talking to pupils and seeing for themselves the evidence of school improvement actions, governors are successfully checking the accuracy of information they receive from leaders and are identifying any emerging issues to explore further. Governors are now ready to fill the vacancies on the governing body and have a clear indication of the skills which are required to further support them in carrying out their duties as effectively as possible.

Over the last half term, leaders have provided training and development which has ensured that teachers plan mathematics tasks that are closely matched to pupils' needs. There are also more opportunities for pupils to be challenged through a range of reasoning and problem-solving activities. Any pupils who need to catch up are identified and receive intervention on the same day to help them keep up with their year group. Pupils have responded well to the changes and feel that the work is just right for them. They are also aware how they are developing greater independence with their learning. They appreciate that teachers do not give them the answer if they are struck but help them to work it out for themselves. Reading has also been a school priority. Pupils talked eagerly about reading and how they have time devoted to reading each day and are developing greater stamina with reading as a result.

Pupils' outcomes were variable in 2017. At the end of the early years, 80% of children, which is an improving proportion and above the national average, reached a good level of development. The recent introduction of a new outdoor area is already giving activities greater purpose and challenge. Challenge prompts, both inside and outside, help staff in moving on children's learning as they access the different areas. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the phonics screening check, although above the national average by the end of Year 2, was below average in Year 1 in 2017. You have already responded by arranging for additional support to make sure that the teaching of phonics is quickly improved. Year 2 outcomes improved overall in 2017 and particularly for the most able pupils. However, Year 6 attainment was very disappointing and was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in writing and mathematics

was also significantly below the national average. This cohort has been affected by high levels of pupil mobility not seen in other year groups. Importantly, school assessment information and work in pupils' books show that in other year groups across the school pupils are currently making much better progress. The proportion who were exceeding the expectations at the end of each year group had increased by July 2017. You are aware that a large proportion of pupils need to make accelerated progress during key stage 2, particularly given their starting points at the end of key stage 1 which were very high for many pupils.

Following the introduction of new school values and a system for managing pupils' behaviour and tracking unacceptable behaviour, there are now very few behaviour incidents. Changes to staff supervision and the provision of a range of resources to use on the playground mean pupils are now well supervised and are effectively occupied. Pupils also demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and particularly enjoy the interesting learning activities in the new curriculum that you have introduced. For example, pupils talked with enthusiasm about being able to dissect a heart to aid their understanding of how a heart works.

External support

Leaders have been swift in their response to advice from external reviews of governance and of pupil premium spending. This has helped you to address some of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Leaders have also benefited from the support of a local leader of education. This has enabled the relatively new senior leadership team to learn from the good practice of others. It has also provided wider staff development opportunities. Regular support from the local authority makes sure that the accuracy of leaders' evaluations and the impact of their actions are under rigorous review. Consequently, the pace of improvement is quickening and leaders are developing greater capacity to improve the school with less frequent external 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 Doncaster. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey
Her Majesty's Inspector