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Dear Mrs Fletcher

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Borrow Wood Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 9 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 March 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.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, other subject leaders and representatives from the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. We visited all classes together, looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with them about their learning. I also spoke formally with a group of pupils. I considered a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation plan. Subject leaders' action plans were also evaluated. I spoke with a local authority school support improvement officer. I scrutinised the safeguarding policy and the single central record.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection, you have successfully appointed an assistant headteacher who is responsible for improving teaching and learning. You have also appointed new leaders of English and mathematics. At the end of the last academic year, seven teachers resigned their positions and you have since appointed six new teachers. One of these teachers is responsible for leading science provision in the school. You now have a full complement of staff at the school.

## **Main findings**

Since the last inspection, you and other leaders have made a swift response to the need to make improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. You provide astute leadership and have wasted little time in making improvements to the quality of provision. You have quickly developed an effective leadership team. They are knowledgeable and supportive of the changes needed to ensure that every child receives the best education possible. As a leadership team, you work well together and everyone knows their roles and responsibilities.

Leaders have developed new ways to ensure that teachers improve their accuracy in identifying the next steps in pupils' learning. A mathematics specialist has delivered training to develop the mathematics curriculum, and the mathematics leader has visited another local school to see effective provision. As a result of a new tracking system, teachers are able to track pupils' progress through a mathematics topic. This ensures that pupils move through the topic with appropriate challenge and support in place. Pupils understand this system and are keen to challenge themselves in lessons. It is clear from pupils' workbooks that most teachers are engaged in closely monitoring pupils' progress through tasks that are matched appropriately to the ability of the pupils. Most teachers intervene quickly to tackle pupils' misconceptions.

The mathematics leader knows that there is still further development required to ensure that the new tracking system fully meets the needs of the school. He monitors the quality of mathematics teaching regularly. He works alongside the deputy headteacher to ensure that there is accurate evaluation of teaching and learning in place. He provides pertinent feedback to teachers to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning further improves. The mathematics leader has a robust plan for further improvement in place that is linked closely to the school's improvement plan. He is currently undertaking a course in order to achieve a national qualification in middle leadership.

The English leader is developing the school's approach to improving the quality of teaching and learning. She has successfully implemented a programme of 'steps to success' for each lesson objective. This is providing pupils with a clear framework to improve their work. One child who spoke to me said that if they 'get stuck' with their work, they use the 'steps to success' working wall to help them. This new

strategy for the school is delivered well in key stage 1, where pupils are making rapid progress. The English leader acknowledges that further work needs to be done in key stage 2 to ensure that there is greater consistency in matching tasks to pupils' needs. Pupils' workbooks show that the most able pupils receive appropriate challenge. The leader is ensuring that there is greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning through regular monitoring alongside the deputy headteacher.

You and the English leader have ensured that teachers and teaching assistants have received comprehensive training from a senior leader in education to further develop subject knowledge in the teaching of reading. The English leader's action plan is comprehensive and links well to the school's key priorities for improvement.

The science leader, who has recently joined the school, has a comprehensive action plan in which she astutely identifies key priorities. She is receiving training to further develop the provision and the assessment of science. The science leader ensures that there is effective provision in place through looking at pupils' workbooks, conducting learning walks with senior leaders and discussions with pupils.

Together we looked at pupils' workbooks to assess whether teachers provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics across the curriculum. We could see that pupils' workbooks have a broad range of subjects other than English and mathematics where they can practise their key skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 have had opportunities to write about life in the trenches as a soldier in the First World War, and pupils in Year 2 wrote about the story of Diwali. We noted that the standard of presentation and the quality of work across the curriculum have improved significantly.

As well as classwork, you have ensured that subject leaders develop theme days to engage pupils in their learning. For example, these leaders have organised science days, enterprise projects and educational trips to build on the curriculum. You acknowledge that standards across the curriculum will still need to be monitored carefully.

You have restructured the organisation of teaching assistants. Where specific pupils require one-to-one support, you have ensured that effective provision is still in place. Additional group support is provided for a small number of pupils who have specific learning and emotional needs. They receive an individualised programme of support. The leader for special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities monitors this provision closely. Pupils' workbooks and assessment information show that those pupils who receive this provision make good progress.

You rightly acknowledge that pupils make faster progress when teaching assistants work alongside class teachers. You note that this serves as an important part of teaching assistants' training. They are able to learn from class teachers how to support pupils to make progress with the new curriculum. The leader for SEN

and/or disabilities meets regularly with teaching assistants to provide training and support. Teaching assistants are developing their knowledge and expertise more fully to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the most able pupils. Teaching assistants have recently received training to improve the teaching of reading. They are invited to attend regular school training events to build on their knowledge and expertise. During our tour of the school, we saw many examples where teaching assistants provided effective support to a range of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils who spoke to me said that they felt teaching assistants supported them well in class.

You and other leaders have ensured that you have systems in place for checking and evaluating the school's performance. You have planned a detailed monitoring and evaluation schedule to ensure that there are frequent checks on pupils' learning. Together, we looked at a range of monitoring documentation. Feedback to teachers and teaching assistants is precise and you ensure that development points continue to be addressed through frequent checks on learning. As a result of this work, the quality of teaching and learning has improved.

You and other leaders have ensured that meetings take place regularly to discuss pupils' progress. Subject leaders also receive school-wide assessment information to check that standards in their areas of responsibility are consistently good enough. They know that pupils' tracking information serves to inform them of standards across the school. Where teaching is less effective, leaders have put plans in place to ensure that there is swift improvement so that pupils make faster progress. Regular moderation activities take place, ensuring that the standard of work across the school is of a high quality.

Through recent appointments to the leadership team, you have ensured that the school has greater capacity to evaluate provision more effectively. You have astutely ensured that middle leaders are receiving appropriate training and support through senior leaders in education, leadership programmes and working with other schools. For example, the newly appointed assistant headteacher is receiving training as part of the national leadership programme for senior leaders. Leaders are using their training effectively to improve standards. For example, leaders provide bespoke coaching support to ensure that there are further improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

You acknowledge that, although sharing good practice in the early years has started, more work needs to be done to ensure that more staff have opportunities to see outstanding practice in the early years. You understand the importance of sharing good practice within school and opportunities to see learning in other schools.

You know that improvements in teaching and learning stem from a consistent and rigorous approach to sharing, checking and evaluating the school's provision.

The governing body provides appropriate support and challenge to leaders at the school. They have also received training from the local authority. The governing body has a range of skills and expertise. They have recently conducted an audit of these. They are in the process of creating their own action plan to complement the work of the school. Members of the governing body conduct regular visits to the school to check the work of leaders.

### **External support**

You have increased the level of external support to help you improve the quality of the school's work. You have sought support from local leaders in education for mathematics and English. The school support improvement officer for Derby City Council visits the school regularly to provide support to improve standards. She has provided training to the governing body and senior and middle leaders. The school has also received funding from Derby City to receive additional training for phonics and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Emma Nuttall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**