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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mr David McLeod
Headteacher
Broadwood Primary School
Broadwood Road
Denton Burn
Newcastle upon Tyne
Tyne and Wear
NE15 7TB

Dear Mr McLeod

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Broadwood Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 14 December 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 November 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 good.

The school should take further action to:

- develop the skills and effectiveness of middle leaders, holding them fully accountable for the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes across key stages
- refine improvement plans for the early years by including more detail, clearer time frames and sharper success criteria
- enrich the teaching and learning environments further in terms of literacy and numeracy.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, pupils, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan and middle leaders' action plans were evaluated. I conducted teaching and learning observations jointly with you and with the deputy headteacher across key stages and looked at the quality of pupils' work in books and on display. I considered assessment information about current pupils' progress and I scrutinised a range of documents, including the outcomes of leaders and the local authority's monitoring activities and the impact of performance management.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection which judged the school to require improvement, a number of staffing changes have taken place. In August 2017, five teaching assistants left and have not been replaced. One teacher departed and a newly qualified teacher was recruited. You have restructured your senior leadership team to include phase leaders, English and mathematics leaders, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator.

Main findings

You took up post just before the previous inspection in November 2016. You acted promptly to address priorities identified in the report. A core recommendation was to improve the quality of teaching to ensure that pupils make good progress from their starting points. You wasted no time in dealing with weaknesses that you observed in teaching and learning, skilfully supporting and also challenging adults to improve their practice. Records show that you identify strengths accurately while also stating clearly what staff need to do next in order to improve their practice. You have been particularly successful in raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of and can achieve across the curriculum. This is evident in the aspirations now expressed by staff and pupils, as well as the improvements in pupils' books. Staff, pupils and parents express confidence in your vision and capabilities.

Despite significant budgetary constraints and some difficulties in terms of recruitment, you are determined to improve pupils' outcomes further. You know that high-quality teaching on a day-to-day basis is vital in realising this ambition. You are committed to empowering and enabling teaching staff. Together with governors and senior leaders, you have brought about consistency in monitoring procedures and performance management systems. You provide staff with regular, good-quality training and professional development opportunities which are focused correctly on individual needs as well as school priorities. You have also made links with several other providers, locally and further afield, to allow staff to benefit from partnership working and the sharing of good practices. Also, by tweaking

assessment systems, leaders identify more precisely the rate and extent of pupils' progress. Accuracy in assessment also means that teachers' planning is better informed and more closely matched to pupils' starting points and needs.

Such efforts are beginning to make a positive difference in terms of pupils' outcomes. In 2017, a higher proportion of pupils in key stage 2 reached expected and greater depths of learning in reading and mathematics than in 2016. Similarly, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 reaching expected and greater depths of learning in reading and mathematics in 2017 also improved.

You are not complacent, however, and understand that the pace of improvement now needs to accelerate. Pupils' starting points in each key stage across subjects remain below those seen typically for their age. While areas of improvement were evident in 2017, rates of progress were not sufficiently rapid to catch pupils up with others nationally in subjects across the curriculum. Not all teaching and learning spaces are suitably rich in literacy and numeracy to support pupils in their learning.

Furthermore, although you have directed and coached teaching staff to improve their practices, not all middle leaders are confident or sufficiently skilled to lead improvement in their areas of responsibility. They do not yet have the leadership experience or expertise needed to have a measurable effect on improving pupils' outcomes. You have correctly identified the development of middle leaders as a crucial next step in order to secure more rapid progress for all pupils.

The quality of teaching in the early years was identified as an area for improvement in the previous inspection. You undertook to address the report's recommendations. Senior leaders worked alongside staff to raise adults' expectations and to improve the quality of provision. Children now read every day and practise their basic skills in writing and mathematics more frequently. They are inquisitive, well behaved and happy. The progress of current children, from starting points that are lower than those typical of their age, is promising, particularly in the prime areas of learning.

You have, however, recognised that further scrutiny of the early years is essential. Outcomes in the early years are variable over time and the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in 2017 remained below the national average. While you feel high rates of mobility among children have contributed in part to these disappointing outcomes, you recognise that leaders have work to do. Improvement plans for the early years, for example, lack detail and measurability. Teaching and learning is not yet consistently good. Although slow to respond to the school's needs, the local authority has now committed to supporting more rapid improvement in the early years.

External support

The local authority was slow to respond to the recommendations from the previous inspection. However, since September 2017, there has been demonstrable support and challenge, for example in sharpening improvement plans and developing the role of governors. More urgency in addressing the previous report's findings and better partnership working is now evident.

Since the previous inspection, governors and leaders have been outward looking in their approach. They have been active in securing positive links with other providers, both locally and from further afield. This is supporting teachers and leaders to develop and improve their practices and allowing them to moderate pupils' work with improved accuracy.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona Manuel
Her Majesty's Inspector