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Ms Suzanne Clough
Moor Nook Community Primary School
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Lancashire
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Dear Ms Clough

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Moor Nook Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 19 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 a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the school's website is up to date and complies with government requirements
- include in the school's improvement plan more precise success criteria that focus on pupils' achievement
- accelerate progress in reading and mathematics for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to improve attainment, especially by the end of key stage 2.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and your deputy headteacher. I met with two parents who shared their views about the school. I also met with a group of pupils in Year 6 and talked informally throughout the day with other pupils. I had a discussion with two of the local authority's school improvement advisers to discuss the action taken since the last inspection and the level of support provided. I met with three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. I examined a variety of documentation, including the school's improvement plan, assessment documentation, minutes of meetings, documents connected with safeguarding and records of your checks on the quality of teaching and learning. We also carried out a series of joint visits to classrooms to look at pupils' progress in English and mathematics. I also analysed a selection of books from pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2.

Context

Since the last inspection there have been a number of changes of staff, which have contributed positively to a slowly improving picture of effectiveness. You have a new leader in early years and a temporary teacher covering for a member of staff who is on a sabbatical.

Main findings

You and your senior leaders are improving progress for your pupils and the quality of teaching. You have a clear action plan that addresses the areas for improvement that were raised in the previous inspection report. Although you have included details about actions, resources and timings, you acknowledge that you do not have precise success statements that focus on the intended impact of your actions on pupils' achievement in English and mathematics.

You took decisive action to tackle some underperformance in teaching, which resulted in the appointment of two new teachers, including the new leader of the early years, in April 2017.

You have ensured that governors now have a more influential role in the leadership of the school. You promptly commissioned an external review of governance and have acted on its recommendations. Governors now challenge school leaders more rigorously and carry out their responsibilities with increasing effectiveness. They receive effective training in safeguarding and actively seek training if they identify gaps in their expertise, such as in analysing school assessment information. The result is a more confident governing body than before. However, they recognise that the school's website is currently not compliant with government guidelines. They have undertaken to address the issues concerned with missing information about admissions to the school, the curriculum and the remits of the governing body and its committees.

You organised an external review of the use of pupil premium funding within a term of the previous inspection. You have taken prompt action to carry out its recommendations. There is now a new leader for pupil premium matters in school. She ensures that the support strategies, such as using teaching assistants to work individually with pupils to improve their reading, are better focused. There is also now a governor with responsibility for monitoring the effective use of pupil premium funding. Although there has been some improvement in pupils' progress in English and mathematics, you accept that the difference between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers is still not diminishing quickly enough.

You have continued with strategies to improve underperformance in pupils' achievement that you introduced before the last inspection and have developed others. These include a more focused use of assessment in English and mathematics, so that pupils and teachers have a clear understanding of the skills pupils need to meet the expected standard for their year group. Year 6 pupils who met with me said they recognise some of the improvements that have happened since the last inspection, including their improved interest in learning about mathematics and writing because staff provide extra support for them when needed. Although there was some improvement in the reading and mathematics tests in Year 6 in 2017, you accept that the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard is still too low and that you need to accelerate pupils' progress in these subjects.

You have also improved assessment systems for the whole school in a range of subjects including English and mathematics. These are now based clearly on the principles of the national curriculum, and focus on pupils' acquisition of the appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills. This enables subject leaders to gain a better overview of standards in their subject, which are gradually improving. However, the systems for subjects other than English and mathematics have only been in use since September 2017, so it is still too early to see their impact.

Your work to promote reading among pupils is starting to have a positive effect. Pupils I spoke with were enthusiastic about the school's new 'reading challenge', which rewards pupils with bronze, silver and gold badges as they read more books. You also encourage their parents to join in by asking them to make sure they sign their reading record. However, the positive attitudes to reading that you are starting to create have yet to translate into higher proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard or better by the end of Year 6.

You have introduced activities and books so that pupils have a better understanding of matters relating to gender and sexuality. They develop greater levels of respect to prevent extreme and radical views. Pupils I spoke with conveyed a clear message that they have an improved grasp of equalities and their importance.

Since the appointment of the new early years leader, you have brought about rapid change to the way staff use the outdoor area to support children's learning. There

are now plenty of opportunities for children to use their imagination and develop their physical coordination, for example by playing with crates and large construction equipment. They use their writing and mathematical skills with increasing frequency. You have also begun the process of physically redesigning the outdoor area to make it more effective in developing children's learning. As a consequence of these measures, outdoor activities are increasingly purposeful and are beginning to make a more substantial contribution to children's overall development.

The early years leader now makes more focused and more accurate use of baseline assessments and there is a more detailed and clearer system to track children's progress. As a result, leaders have an improving overview of children's achievement in the early years.

The two parents who spoke to me were very positive about the improvements they have seen, especially the progress they feel their children now make. They said that you and your staff are very approachable and that you deal well with any concerns they may have. They also said their children are safe in school and that there is hardly any bullying.

Your electronic safeguarding records are thorough and detailed, showing prompt responses to concerns. Since your arrival, you have had no need to make any referrals to social care, although other agencies have made some referrals. Your record of the required checks on members of staff is compliant.

Year 6 pupils who met with me told me they feel safe in school and could describe ways that adults keep them safe. These include secure school grounds and regular information about online safety.

External support

The local authority has provided effective support to the school in order to raise standards. The advisers have made a significant contribution to the developing picture of improvement by commissioning or directly providing guidance to improve teaching and the work of the governors. They are now of the opinion that you and your leadership team are beginning to need less support from them.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Quinn
Her Majesty's Inspector