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Mrs C Appleby
Headteacher
Keep Hatch Primary School
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Dear Mrs Appleby

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Keep Hatch Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 17 April 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring 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 monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- embed the changes you have made to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently strong throughout the school
- improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the executive headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. You led me on a tour of the school and provided me with a wide range of the school's documentation to scrutinise. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I met with a group of pupils and spoke to some pupils during lessons. I

reviewed pupils' work with your middle leadership team. I considered the 170 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the 124 free-text comments.

Context

Since the last inspection, the previous headteacher has left the school. In May 2017, governors appointed a new senior leadership team made up of yourself (promoted from deputy headteacher), the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), (promoted to deputy headteacher), and an executive headteacher from Frays multi-academy trust. New appointments to the governing body have ensured that it is now operating at full capacity.

Main findings

Immediately after the last inspection, leaders made some changes to the school which led to an improvement in pupils' outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and in reading and mathematics. However, there was some turbulence in leadership which meant that, overall, actions were not sufficiently systematic. This has been remedied and, since May 2017, your new senior leadership team has addressed the areas for improvement more methodically and precisely, so that the school as a whole has improved much more quickly since then.

As headteacher, you have been particularly effective in developing a new, pupil-centred vision and values system, which acts as a basis for the improvements the school is making. Importantly, while leaders and governors have been rigorous in their approach to making necessary changes to improve the school, you have taken care to support staff through the process of change to ensure that the positive ethos of the school is maintained.

You, leaders and governors have a precise understanding of the strengths and areas for further improvement in your school. This school self-evaluation is far more rigorous and accurate than in the past. Your revised and highly effective action plan focuses, rightly, on improving rapidly the quality of teaching and leadership. Any new initiatives are carefully researched and implemented, and their effectiveness is evaluated and monitored. You make suitable adjustments to ensure that actions are embedded and work well.

The executive headteacher's sharply analytical approach is helping to quickly and accurately identify aspects of teaching and learning that need to improve. Your revised teaching and learning policy sets out clearly the 'non-negotiables' you expect. You are not afraid to challenge and support staff to improve their practice. Whole-staff training and bespoke coaching are helping staff to refine their approach. Where this works best, staff plan work that effectively challenges pupils from their different starting points. Teachers keep a sharp eye on pupils' needs, ensuring that they are supported to make strong progress. For example, the use of high-quality

reading texts is working well to inspire pupils' writing. A more consistent expectation that pupils should edit and improve their work is also developing well. Pupils' books confirm that, as a result of your efforts, standards of writing are much improved, particularly in Years 5 and 6. You are very well aware of where inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and are working effectively to address these.

You have acted effectively on the advice from your review of pupil premium provision. Over time, you have refined your use of extra help for disadvantaged pupils, carefully monitoring the impact of this support and making swift changes that enable pupils to make stronger progress than they have in the past. The attainment of this group of pupils improved noticeably last year. Your recent emphasis on ensuring that teaching considers carefully the needs and interests of these pupils is well judged. So, too, is your focus on making sure that children in early years do not fall behind. As a result, current pupils are making strong progress, with many exceeding the progress made by their peers. However, leaders recognise that work to improve disadvantaged pupils' outcomes is necessarily ongoing, and more needs to be done to prevent pupils in key stage 1 from falling behind.

Since the previous inspection, the quality of provision in the early years foundation stage has improved. Children now use the outside areas more effectively because adults plan activities that hold children's interest effectively. You have improved the effectiveness of tracking systems so that you have a better understanding of children's progress and can respond more quickly to help children's learning move on. Last year, a larger than average proportion of children achieved a good level of development and this trend is continuing for current children. Adults have received training in how to encourage children in their play and learning, for example as they practise writing. However, this has not yet been thoroughly embedded, so the progress of some children is not as rapid as it might be.

Governors have made sure that current leaders are able to be effective in their roles. Expert coaching in leadership, delivered by the executive headteacher, is strongly enhancing the skills of new senior and middle leaders. All play their part in helping to improve the quality of teaching and in monitoring pupils' progress. A new assessment system is helping leaders to hold teachers more effectively to account for pupils' progress. Middle leaders monitor teachers' planning to make sure that teachers more carefully consider the progress of different groups of pupils and provide activities that challenge pupils effectively. This is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' progress throughout the school, particularly at key stage 2.

Your work to improve the attendance of pupils is developing well. You are tenacious in ensuring that vulnerable pupils get the help and support they need to attend school more regularly. You have raised pupils' and parents' and carers' awareness of the importance of regular attendance, for example through termly rewards for 100% attendance and parents' meetings to identify ways to help individual pupils' attendance to improve. This work is ongoing.

Since the last inspection, governors have undertaken an external review of their work. They have acted on the recommendations very well, so that they now know how to hold the school to account more successfully. Records show that governors are sharply focused on pupils' progress. They ask the right questions of leaders to ensure that leaders are evaluative and continue to focus sharply on the impact of their actions. In addition, governors' oversight of the school website is now strong. The remodelled website is much more useful for parents, informing them of the curriculum and the many ways in which leaders and staff ensure that pupils develop well during their time in school.

External support

Frays Teaching School Alliance provides training and advice that are helping you to improve the quality of teaching. In addition, useful external support has been brokered by the local authority, including advice on governance, early years provision and the effective use of pupil premium funding.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Old
Her Majesty's Inspector