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3 May 2018

Ms Sarah Bolt
Newfield Primary School
Longstone Avenue
Willesden
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Dear Ms Bolt

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Newfield Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 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:

- improve the consistency of teaching and learning by ensuring that all teachers have appropriately high expectations for pupils' achievement
- ensure that challenge for the most able pupils is consistent across year groups and subjects.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, senior leaders, pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority. Discussions focused on the actions taken by leaders since the inspection and their impact on pupils' achievement. The school improvement plan and action plans were evaluated, as was other documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, minutes of meetings of

the governing body, current assessment information and the single central record of pre-employment checks on staff. We jointly observed learning in all year groups and completed a work scrutiny with a member of the leadership team.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership team has been restructured to include an additional assistant headteacher. New leaders have been appointed with responsibilities related to the school's priorities. There have also been changes to governance.

Main findings

With the support of senior leaders and governors, you have acted swiftly to improve standards. Senior leaders' roles and responsibilities have been reviewed to focus precisely on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. School leaders have been assigned to specific areas, while working collaboratively towards shared goals. Senior leaders now have a clear understanding of the school's performance. They are using information on pupils' progress well to help staff plan and assess more effectively and are holding teachers to account more closely for the impact they have on improving pupils' outcomes. The capacity of leaders to continue to drive improvement is strong.

Senior leaders have taken swift and effective action to improve the systems used to monitor teaching and learning. They carry out a number of checks that include scrutiny of lesson planning and pupils' work, as well as lesson observations. This gives leaders a detailed overview of the quality of teaching and learning across school. Leaders are also able to use these activities to ascertain the subject knowledge of teachers and whether the needs of the most able pupils are being met, for example. Coaching is used to improve teaching and learning. As a result, the standard of teaching has improved. However, leaders acknowledge that some inconsistencies remain in teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.

The school improvement plan is comprehensive and effective. A clear set of actions address the key issues of leadership and management, the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes. The plan is well structured. Timescales are identified, as are the criteria for checking whether objectives have been achieved. Termly commentary on the impact in each area includes the next steps for development. The plan confirms that the actions you are taking to improve the school are having a clear impact. For example, the school's assessment information shows that pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are making strong progress, suggesting that they are on track to reach their increasingly challenging targets.

You and your leaders introduced a new system to ensure that teachers use ongoing assessment more effectively. As a result, teachers are able to identify quicker those pupils who are falling behind in their learning. This development is having a positive

impact on pupils' achievement, particularly on the progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. For example, during our joint visits to classrooms, we observed several support sessions for individuals and small groups of pupils. Teaching assistants are effective in helping pupils catch up with their peers. Pupils said that they appreciate this additional support.

All staff benefit from effective professional development. This has included a range of activities and initiatives, including visits to another school to observe teaching and learning. Staff are expected to apply what they have learned from their training and this is effectively linked to the performance management process. For example, you have ensured that all staff are now confident with the appropriate terminology needed to teach grammar.

Whole-school training is focused on key areas for development in teaching. For example, you have improved teaching strategies for problem solving in mathematics; the impact is evident in pupils' work, which shows that they are now expected to explain their reasoning. This has contributed to a general improvement in the teaching of mathematics across the school and pupils' progress in mathematics. Similarly, your initiatives have been successful in improving the teaching of reading, resulting in pupils' stronger progress. Leaders acknowledge that there is still work to be done in ensuring that pupils, particularly the most able, are challenged sufficiently in order to reach the higher standards.

Leaders have ensured that all staff respond swiftly and consistently to behaviour issues. As a result, learning can continue without disturbance and there has been a decrease in exclusions. Pupils said that they are able to learn and comment on how much things have changed for the better.

External support

A significant factor in the school's continuing improvement is the positive use it makes of external support. The local authority lead professional has worked effectively with senior leaders. This support has been well received. Support from the local authority has included creating effective partnerships with other schools. This is providing a variety of opportunities for leaders and teachers to develop their expertise. For example, effective partnership working has included moderation in English and mathematics and has helped to ensure that teachers' assessments are accurate. Without doubt, the support from the local authority has increased the school's capacity for further improvement. The local authority now considers the school to be self-sustaining and supports a more formalised partnership with an outstanding school. The local authority will continue to monitor the progress of the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Donna Chambers
Her Majesty's Inspector