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Mrs Dominique Osborne
Principal
Edward Heneage Primary Academy
Edward Street
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Dear Mrs Osborne

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Edward Heneage Primary Academy

Following my visit to your school on 16 May 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in September 2017. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, senior and middle leaders, a group of staff, the regional director of the trust and the chair of the Academy Improvement Board (AIB). The trust's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

I observed learning in parts of lessons alongside you and middle leaders. I looked in pupils' books and spoke to pupils about their learning. I met with parents at the start of the school day and observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and around the school.

I studied the school's documents relating to safeguarding, minutes from meetings about pupils' achievement and those from AIB meetings. I considered information relating to pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance.

Context

Following the inspection, the trust ensured that structures were in place to hold leaders to account fully by replacing the local governing body with the AIB. You have been in place since September 2016, providing much-needed stability during a time of frequent staffing changes at the school. A number of middle leaders are new to their posts and a small number of temporary teaching staff are currently employed at the school to cover staff vacancies. You are in the process of recruiting new permanent members of staff for the new school year.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Since taking on the role of principal, you have been tenacious in your ambition to improve the school. Your unwillingness to accept anything less than effective teaching has raised the expectations of all staff of what pupils can and will achieve. You provide clarity and honesty about the work that still needs to be done to improve the overall effectiveness of the school. Pupils are proud to come to the school and enjoy learning. Staff appreciate the wealth of training and development opportunities available to them and are resolute in their commitment to improving the life chances of pupils. Consequently, despite the school's position, staff morale is high and there is a positive atmosphere in the school.

With the support of the trust, you have acted swiftly to address the legacy of pupils' underachievement. You have introduced clear approaches to the teaching of reading, mathematics and the wider curriculum. However, embedding these approaches securely into teaching has proven difficult, because of the number of temporary staff who are currently employed at the school. You acknowledge that the quality of teaching remains variable across the school and between subjects. You have established clear systems to ensure that pupils at risk of underachievement are identified and tracked, and receive targeted support. Leaders delve deeply into possible causes of pupils' underperformance and check carefully that tailored provision is working. As a result, the vast majority of pupils are now making steady progress and a higher proportion of pupils are reaching standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. You, rightly, recognise that there is still more to do to ensure that pupils' attainment and progress are in line with national averages. This is particularly true of disadvantaged pupils, who need to make rapid progress to perform in line with other pupils nationally.

The trust has played a critical role in providing professional development for middle leaders. For example, a new early years leader has benefited greatly from the support of an early years specialist. Despite only being in post for three months, she has already strengthened early years provision considerably. She understands how to implement strategies for improvement, particularly in relation to children's language development. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of this work on children's overall outcomes. Alongside the AIB, you hold middle leaders to

account effectively and, therefore, know which areas of leadership are not yet robust enough and where further training is needed. For instance, you identify accurately that leaders are not yet able to evaluate whether pupil premium funding is being spent effectively. For the most part, middle leaders' actions and evaluations are not tightly focused on raising pupils' achievement. You are fully aware that there is further work to do before middle leaders are effective in driving improvements.

Teaching and learning in mathematics has improved greatly. The new mathematics leader, with support from a trust specialist leader, has ensured that pupils receive a daily diet of number and calculation work. Pupils are now increasingly fluent in their mental agility and show a deepening understanding of numbers. Their understanding is consolidated through frequent opportunities to verbalise and write about their mathematical understanding. However, the teaching of problem solving and reasoning is not always good enough. Leaders acknowledge that activities must present a greater level of challenge for all pupils, but particularly for the most able.

The teaching of phonics and spelling, particularly in key stage 1, is effective in ensuring that pupils acquire essential skills for reading and writing. Following previous support from the trust, pupils now have regular opportunities to develop their reading comprehension skills, starting in the early years. Pupils in some year groups make good progress in reading, by exploring high-quality texts and using appropriate scaffolds to support their answers to questions. However, you acknowledge that this practice is not yet embedded and the quality of teaching varies across the school. You, rightly, identify that reading activities do not always match the pupils' needs. The level of challenge is often not high enough to stretch the most able pupils.

Following the trial of a new trust-wide approach to teaching the wider curriculum subjects in some year groups, pupils now receive a wealth of opportunity to write at length on a variety of topics. You are clear that this practice is not yet consistently applied across all year groups. Where this approach is in place, pupils demonstrate secure knowledge in a range of subjects and take pride in their work. Their writing reflects the increased opportunities they have to consolidate their understanding of English grammar, punctuation and spelling. As a result, an increasing proportion of pupils are working at the age-expected standard in this aspect. You are fully aware that, before this approach is extended across the school, work is needed to ensure that the teaching of the wider curriculum promotes the acquisition of subject-specific skills, such as those involved in scientific or historical enquiry. You also know that teaching in the wider curriculum needs to be more effective in broadening pupils' vocabulary.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding are compliant with legal requirements. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe from harm. Relationships between staff, pupils and families are strong. As a result, vulnerable families are identified accurately and are well supported by pastoral staff. Any

necessary referrals to external agencies are carried out swiftly and potential risks to pupils are minimised. You recognise that further work remains in ensuring that the culture of safeguarding embeds, and all staff members are well prepared for any eventuality. Pupils say that they are very happy and that they feel safe. They agree unanimously that the rare instances of bullying are dealt with well by the school staff. The parents I spoke to during the visit were very positive in their views of school and feel confident to speak to a member of staff in the event of any concerns.

Leaders are rigorous in tackling pupils' absences. This has resulted in pupils' attendance being in line with the national average. Leaders' meticulous focus on supporting pupils who are regularly absent has reduced the proportion of pupils regularly away from school dramatically, bringing it below the national average. You have ensured that appropriate systems are in place for promoting positive behaviour. Leaders are adept in tailoring behavioural support for individuals. As a result, pupils are polite and welcoming, and model exemplary manners. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour as they moved around school was calm and orderly. In lessons, pupils demonstrated effective learning behaviour and a clear desire to learn.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the regional director of the trust, the chair of the AIB, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North East Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Karine Hendley

Her Majesty's Inspector