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Mrs S. Beston
Perry Wood Primary and Nursery School
St Albans Close
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Dear Mrs Beston

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Perry Wood Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 7 June 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 ensure that:

- teaching challenges the most able pupils so that a higher proportion work at greater depth and reach the highest possible standard by the time they leave the school
- teachers and support staff, particularly in key stage 2, have high expectations of what pupils should achieve, especially in relation to their presentation and handwriting
- leaders refine their plans to reflect more precisely the areas identified for improvement, and to include criteria against which the success of actions can be measured.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, the chief executive officer and representatives of the Griffin School Trust, and the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's self-evaluation document and the school development plan. I conducted a learning walk around the school with you and both deputy headteachers. Together, we examined pupils' books, and spoke to pupils about their work and their learning. I met with the English and mathematics coordinators, and looked at documents relating to improving and monitoring teaching and learning. Together, we explored the school's current assessment information.

Context

In September 2017, the school appointed a new headteacher and deputy headteacher. The new headteacher was previously one of the deputy headteachers at the school.

Main findings

Since taking up your role as headteacher, you and the new deputy headteacher have responded with resilience and drive to the areas of improvement identified at your last inspection. Together with the assistant headteachers and governors, you share a strong sense of purpose and ambition. As a result, school improvement is now moving at a faster pace and attainment is rising.

You and your leadership team have taken the opportunity to re-establish the school. You have a clear and accurate view of the actions you need to take to improve the school. However, the school development plan does not contain targets which are sharply focused on these key actions. For example, it was clear from the learning walk and the books we explored that reasoning in mathematics was not as strong in pupils' books across Years 3, 4 and 5. Although reasoning was an area for improvement at your last inspection, it was not evident as an area for improvement on your development plan. School achievement information demonstrated that, although the number of most-able pupils across the school working at the higher levels is improving, not enough most-able pupils were attaining the higher standard at the end of Year 6. Again, this priority was not specifically identified on the school development plan. The plan does not accurately measure the impact you and your leaders are having on raising attainment and the quality of teaching across the school.

As senior leaders, you have introduced an accurate and reliable assessment system. It provides you with information not only on the proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher standard in each year but also on the progress that pupils are making from their different starting points. You use this information well with teachers to ensure that they identify pupils' next steps and any gaps in their

learning. This is beginning to have an impact on the progress being made by the current pupils.

You have implemented effective systems and processes to monitor teachers' performance. These systems use a wide range of evidence, such as lesson observation, work scrutiny and achievement information, to identify challenging targets for improvement. These targets are clearly linked to driving up pupils' progress and attainment.

Professional development and support for staff are strengths of the school. The coaching system that you and your leadership team have introduced allows the staff to learn from each other and set specific targets for improvement based around their individual needs. Consequently, teachers are effectively supported and challenged to improve the quality of teaching. As a result, teaching is rapidly improving, particularly across key stage 1 and in Year 6. You and your leadership team are aware of the need to continue to further strengthen teaching in Years 3, 4 and 5.

You are also providing effective training to support teachers in developing their subject knowledge. For example, all staff have been trained on how to deliver reasoning and problem-solving skills to pupils. As a result, pupils now have more opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge in complex tasks. This is now a strong feature seen in some pupils' books. However, not all pupils have similar and frequent opportunities to engage in this level of thinking. In particular, pupils across Years 3, 4 and 5 are not working at this depth. You and your fellow leaders are aware of the need to continue to ensure that pupils across all year groups apply these skills.

While looking at books in lessons, it was evident that, at times, teachers' expectations of how pupils present their work and the quality of pupils' handwriting are not high enough. This was also evident when talking to pupils about their work. For example, in a mathematics lesson, some pupils that I spoke to found it difficult to explain their thinking about what they had learned because the presentation of their work was untidy and difficult to read. These pupils then struggled to identify the errors they had made.

Grammar, punctuation and spelling are now taught regularly, and pupils have more opportunities across the curriculum to write for a range of purposes in a variety of styles. This was seen during a mathematics lesson where pupils had to solve a mathematical problem linked to the number of boats needed to rescue sailors from Dunkirk, and then write a letter to Winston Churchill with their findings and suggestions. Evidence in the books also showed that pupils have many opportunities to check their work and identify and correct errors.

During the learning walk, across the early years it was clear that children have good access to well-resourced indoor and outdoor areas. The adults plan a wide range of interesting and purposeful activities that motivate and engage children well. This

was evident in the children's enthusiasm to tell us about the dinosaur who had visited their classroom that night. Many of the children were engaged in writing, labelling and drawing activities linked to this theme. The adults in the setting promoted language well. For example, they encouraged children to talk about the size, shape and colour and the sounds the dinosaurs made. Such effective practice helps to promote children's language.

External support

The school values the external support given by the Griffin School Trust. As part of this support, you attend regular meetings to discuss school improvement, and have established opportunities for teachers and leaders to observe good and outstanding practice. The Griffin School Trust has supported you in drawing up a plan for raising achievement. However, this plan does not focus sufficiently on the specific needs of your school. The lack of key improvement measures in this plan makes it difficult for the trust to form a precise view about the rate of improvement the school is making linked to the previous areas for improvement from your last inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kerry Rochester
Ofsted Inspector