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25 July 2018

Andrew Clarke
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Clarke

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Peel Common Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 3 July 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement at 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 attendance rates and reduce exclusions among a small group of younger pupils.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and representatives of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Meetings were also held with a group of staff and a group of pupils. Informal discussions were held in the playground with parents and carers. A sample of pupils' work was seen. A range of documents, including the school's development plan and evaluation, pupil assessment information, the records of staff and volunteer vetting arrangements, and the minutes of governors' meetings were

checked. Visits were made with the headteacher and deputy headteacher to all the classrooms to carry out observations of teaching and learning.

Context

Since the last inspection the headteacher has been appointed substantively to his post. A new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and a new governor have joined the school.

Main findings

The school has suitable plans to address the issues requiring improvement. These include providing challenging overall targets for pupils' attainment, and actions to improve teaching. Your evaluation of the impact of the work done now links more effectively to pupils' progress, enabling you and your team to put your efforts into what is working. Your appointment has brought a measure of stability to the school. You were frank about the challenges remaining, both linked to the outcomes of the last inspection and to emerging issues such as the behaviour of some pupils.

The school was asked to improve the way in which work is planned to meet the varying needs of pupils, to build learning on what they already know, and to challenge the most able. The actions you are taking are leading to teachers planning more effectively around pupils' current attainment and targets. Tasks in lessons are now more varied, and pupils say that, typically, more is expected of them. Teachers are doing more to check pupils' progress during lessons so they can vary what pupils do next, tackle any misconceptions and provide extra support. This remains a work in progress and there are still occasions when teachers move on before being sure that pupils have understood essential areas of learning.

Pupils say they receive more effective feedback on their work than in the past, both through verbal guidance from teachers and from where staff follow the school's policy on marking. Most say they are more widely expected to act on what they are told. Your work with teachers on assessing pupils' progress means there is better continuity in the level of work through each year and between year groups. Pupils identified this as a growing feature of their learning, but they also note there is still scope to challenge them more. In lessons we saw times where work was too easy for some.

In most cases, and certainly among the older year groups, pupils continue to be keen to learn. They follow instructions and contribute well in lessons. However, the Year 3 cohort which joined the school in September contains a number of children with significant behavioural issues. This has resulted in a higher number of children having education, health and care plans linked to emotional and behavioural issues than the school has seen before. The school took time to adjust to these challenges. Fixed-term exclusions rose and attendance fell in the autumn term. You and staff such as the SENCo, the family liaison worker, and the attendance officer have

started taking effective action to improve matters, but these efforts are not given a sufficiently high priority in the school's development plan.

With raising standards noted as the second area for action from the previous report, the results of the 2017 Year 6 assessments saw signs of improvement in reading where pupils' progress and attainment improved on that of the year before. Nevertheless, the combined results, showing the number of pupils who had performed at least at the level expected across all these subjects, remained below national figures and below the school's target.

The work you and other leaders are doing with staff ensures that they are more aware of the standards pupils are capable of reaching. Staff find the 'pupil progress' meetings useful in checking the impact of their teaching and planning pupils' next steps. We saw in lessons and in pupils' books the fruits of this work, with progress improving over time in most classes. There are concerns in Year 3, and not yet enough evidence that the most able pupils are achieving all they should across all year groups. Overall, stronger progress is evident among older year groups, a feature of the school's work noted in the last two reports. This reinforces the need for pupils to make consistently good progress from the start, as represented in your action plan.

The final area for improvement in the last report required leaders to make better use of information about pupils' progress in order for them to check the impact of the action being taken. You and your colleagues are making better use of the 'milestone' checkpoints to monitor the progress of classes in the various subject areas. The governors are making more use of this information to hold you and other leaders to account, with more probing questioning about what the information shows. They are keen, for example, to check that pupils eligible for the pupil premium make equally good progress to other pupils nationally. You are also making better use of the information with class teachers to delve into the barriers to learning. We spent time looking at the work done, for instance, to identify aspects of writing which were commonly holding pupils back.

Your use of tracking information to check the progress of different groups of pupils is not yet good enough. You and your colleagues collect a good range of information but have yet to exploit it to check that different groups, such as boys, or those entitled to free school meals, have challenging targets and are on track to hit them.

No review of governance or pupil premium spending was required as an outcome of the previous inspection.

External support

The local authority considers the school to be developing its capacity to improve, while remaining a high priority. Effective support has been provided by a linked officer, and by subject-specialist staff, who have carried out tasks which include validating the school's assessment of pupils' progress. While the local authority

deems the school to be improving, it rightly does not have plans to reduce support until the gains are embedded.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long

Her Majesty's Inspector