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Mrs Janet Witton
Headteacher
Lakeside Primary School
Sandy Lane
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Dear Mrs Witton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lakeside Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 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 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:

- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good in all subjects
- the teaching of reading comprehension skills is effective and provides pupils with a suitable level of challenge
- leaders of wider curriculum subjects consistently take responsibility for improvements in teaching, learning and assessment by monitoring and evaluating them effectively.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and a local authority officer to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I observed teaching and learning jointly with you and other leaders across all year groups. I scrutinised pupils' work alongside the leaders of English and mathematics, and I also reviewed pupils' work in the wider curriculum subjects. I spoke to pupils informally to gather their views about the school and their learning. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and at lunchtime. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day. The school improvement plan was evaluated, along with records of pupils' outcomes, behaviour and attendance. Safeguarding information and the school's evaluations of teaching and learning were considered.

Context

Prior to the last inspection, there had been considerable staffing turbulence. Staffing is now relatively stable. Three teachers have been appointed since the last inspection and another two are due to take up post in September. There have been no changes in senior leadership personnel. However, the senior leadership team is not currently at full capacity and it has been necessary for senior and middle leaders to take on additional responsibilities. The pastoral team has been strengthened through the appointment of an attendance officer and additional staff to focus on pupils' social and emotional needs. Five new governors have been appointed. The school has a higher-than-average proportion of pupils who join and leave at points other than usual transitions. A significant number of pupils join the school who speak little or no English.

Main findings

The last inspection report recommended an external review of governance and this was completed promptly. The review identified a number of actions which governors have since addressed with suitable urgency. Governors completed an audit of their skills and, subsequently, have strengthened the governing body by recruiting new members with specific areas of expertise. This has enabled governors to challenge leaders more effectively. Governors show their commitment to the school through regular focused visits. As a result, they have a secure understanding of pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They are fully aware of the school's priorities and how leaders are strengthening these areas. However, governors do not make full use of the school's improvement plans, which are very detailed and precise, to hold leaders and staff to account with even more rigour.

At the last inspection, you were asked to improve the teaching of reading. Following this, you have introduced a number of strategies to support pupils' fluency and comprehension in reading. You have maintained the effective teaching of phonics.

Teaching staff have strong knowledge of phonics and they use this to ensure that pupils learn through activities which match their needs well. As a result, pupils make strong progress in developing early reading skills: they read fluently and are well equipped to decode unfamiliar words. Leaders have plans in place to maximise the progress children make in the early years. They intend to provide further opportunities for children to consolidate and extend their phonics skills through carefully planned child-initiated activities.

To improve pupils' reading comprehension skills, you have introduced a teaching strategy which ensures that pupils are asked different types of questions. Pupils also have regular opportunities to work in groups with adults on responding to questions about texts and books. You have rightly identified that pupils would benefit from specific teaching of inference skills and two year groups are trialling an approach to tackle this. The impact of these initiatives can be seen in the provisional outcomes for the current Year 6 pupils, who have made considerably stronger progress than those in 2016 and 2017. However, the comprehension activities do not always challenge pupils enough. There is further work to do in developing the knowledge of teaching staff so that pupils are supported well in gaining a deeper understanding of their reading.

The last inspection report also challenged you to improve the progress pupils make in mathematics. Following this, leaders acted swiftly to provide professional development for teaching staff and to introduce a new approach to teaching mathematics. You have restructured lessons. As a result, teachers now assess pupils' starting points regularly and use this information to provide activities which are suitably challenging. Teachers are becoming increasingly skilled in selecting appropriate physical and pictorial representations to aide both their explanations and those of pupils. Leaders have ensured a strong focus on pupils collaborating together. They learn to discuss their thinking with their peers and this has been successful in strengthening pupils' understanding of concepts. Pupils of all abilities now have regular opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to reasoning and problem-solving contexts. These improvements to the quality of teaching are resulting in pupils making stronger progress in mathematics. Consequently, a greater proportion of pupils are now reaching the higher standards of attainment across year groups.

Following the last inspection, you have focused on ensuring that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Through assemblies and lessons, you and your staff have ensured that pupils learn about the ways that people can be different and why it is important to be tolerant of others. Pupils benefit from opportunities to reflect on how they are similar to and different from others, giving consideration to, amongst other aspects, religious beliefs, cultures and family structures. The diversity which is represented in the school community is celebrated and used as a learning resource. A harmonious ethos is evident in the school and pupils show respect for others. Consequently, incidents of bullying and discrimination are very rare.

It was identified at the last inspection that not all wider curriculum subjects were being covered in sufficient depth. You have successfully developed a team of middle leaders who are passionate about effecting improvements in their areas of responsibility. They now check teachers' planning and pupils' work samples at regular intervals to ensure that subjects are being covered. Leaders are in the process of introducing an assessment system for science, with the intention of replicating this in other wider curriculum subjects. Due to this being at the early stages of implementation, teachers are not always fully aware of pupils' starting points and, therefore, do not provide work which challenges all pupils consistently. You are continuing to work with middle leaders to maximise the impact of their work to strengthen teaching, learning and assessment in wider curriculum subjects.

The last inspection report said that pupils' opportunities to apply their English and mathematics skills in other subjects were not frequent enough. Leaders have since created links between subjects which ensure that pupils now have meaningful opportunities to do this. This is especially evident through pupils' learning about 'real life maths'. For example, during a science topic about healthy eating, pupils completed calculation and data handling work about the sugar content of different drinks. Similarly, when learning about the local shopping centre in geography, pupils were able to survey customer choices and present their findings using their mathematical skills. These opportunities are clearly supporting pupils' improved outcomes in mathematics.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to improve pupils' handwriting and their presentation of work. You have introduced a new approach to handwriting and 'non-negotiables' for presentation. This has been effective in ensuring that teachers' expectations of these aspects are suitably high. Displays celebrating well-presented work have been successful in motivating pupils to take pride in their work. Improvements in this area are clear. However, your careful analysis confirms that there remains further work to do before presentation is consistently good across all subjects and year groups.

The last inspection report recommended that an external review of pupil premium funding spending was conducted. This has taken place and confirmed that appropriate systems are in place to enable effective spending. Disadvantaged pupils of all abilities are targeted for bespoke interventions. Leaders now evaluate the impact of this provision carefully and use their findings to plan further learning opportunities. Therefore, they are able to evidence that they use the funding to good effect.

Leaders monitor pupils' attendance rigorously. They regularly refresh incentives for good attendance and are effective in increasing attendance for targeted pupils. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent is above average. However, leaders ensure that support is in place for families and all absence procedures are followed consistently. The school's attendance information is affected by the significant number of families who relocate to other countries.

External support

The external support you have secured has been effective in contributing to improving priority areas. Through partnership with the local authority, middle leaders have received professional development to enhance their leadership skills. A specialist leader in education has supported leaders and staff in continuing improvements in the quality of teaching in English. External consultants have also been effective in contributing to improvements in the early years provision and in developing strategies designed to enhance learning for pupils who speak English as an additional language.

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

Yours sincerely

Karine Hendley
Her Majesty's Inspector