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Mr Phil Cooper
Brough Primary School
Church Brough
Kirkby Stephen
Cumbria
CA17 4EW

Dear Mr Cooper

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Brough Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 2 October 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 recent section 5 inspection in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- secure further improvement in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2, so that attainment in these subjects comes close to the national average
- ensure that the school's website is up to date and complies with government requirements
- include in its improvement plan more precise success criteria that focus on pupils' achievement.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held various discussions with you. I met with a group of pupils in Year 6 and talked informally throughout the day with other pupils. I had a discussion with a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection and the level of support provided. I met with six members of the governing body, including the chair. I examined a variety of documentation, including the school's improvement plan, assessment documentation, documents connected with safeguarding and records of your checks on the quality of teaching and learning. We also carried out a series of joint visits to classrooms to look at pupils' progress in English and mathematics. I also analysed a selection of books from pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2.

Context

Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes of staff, which have contributed positively to an improving picture of effectiveness. You joined the school as acting headteacher shortly after the last inspection in 2017. You were appointed to the role of permanent headteacher with effect from September 2018. There are also two teachers who have joined the school since June 2017. There have been several changes to the governing body since September 2017.

Main findings

You and your team are improving progress for your pupils and the quality of teaching. Leadership and governance are also improving. You have a clear action plan that addresses the areas for improvement that were raised in the previous inspection report. Although you have included details about actions, resources and timings, you do not have precise success statements that focus on the intended impact of your actions on pupils' achievement.

You have ensured that leaders and governors use appropriate comparisons with national standards to develop higher expectations of pupils' achievement. Governors now have a much clearer view of standards in the school and are more rigorous in the challenge they present to you as headteacher. They receive clearer information from you to support them in their task of holding you to account. They are now more confident in analysing assessment information and in seeking evidence from you of the impact your actions have on pupils' progress. They are well trained in safeguarding and have a secure knowledge of procedures and protocols in school.

You have put in place more rigorous procedures for checking on the quality of teaching in the school. These include observations of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work. You analyse your findings carefully and give staff areas for development to ensure that they improve their practice. As a result, there has been improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. You have also revised your school's marking and feedback policy and ensure that all staff adhere to it. Because of your actions,

there is a noticeably improving picture of progress for pupils.

Leaders have ensured that pupils from most year groups make improving progress in English and mathematics. They have introduced a range of strategies to achieve this. In writing, for example, staff and pupils now have clearer targets that more precisely identify the expectations of each year group. You have used your experience as a moderator and trainer in the local authority to support this action.

In mathematics, you have introduced a renewed emphasis on developing pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills. You have provided training for staff to enable them to address pupils' misconceptions more effectively and check their understanding more thoroughly.

Leaders have given reading a higher profile to encourage pupils to make better progress. They have involved parents and carers in this by providing them with information sessions to encourage them to support their child at home. You and your team have created an attractive new library area with a wider range of books to stimulate pupils' interest. You have also introduced a new approach to the teaching of reading. Teachers now more regularly focus on developing a range of reading skills, such as inference and recall of information.

Your actions to strengthen pupils' achievement in these subjects have had a positive impact. Unvalidated assessment information for 2018 shows that pupils have improved their performance in various tests. In Year 6, progress in reading and mathematics improved significantly, so that it now broadly matches that in writing and is in line with the national average. There were also increases in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard in reading and mathematics. The proportion reaching the higher standard in writing remains close to the most recent national average. This reflects the emphasis you have laid on teachers more consistently providing work that challenges the most able.

Results of the tests in Year 2 showed that a higher proportion of pupils reached the expected standard or better in writing and mathematics than that seen in 2017. However, this is still below the national average in both subjects. The proportion reaching the expected standard or better in reading remained close to the most recent national average. All pupils in Year 1 reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check.

Leaders have analysed the assessment information and are determined to bring about even further improvement. You have already planned a range of activities to support pupils and enhance the progress they make. Evidence from books and the school's own assessment information show that most pupils are showing improving progress. There is also evidence of improved presentation, showing pupils' increased pride in their work.

The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online

survey, were positive about the school. All of those who responded said their children feel safe.

Your safeguarding records are thorough and detailed, showing prompt responses to concerns. There are very few cases in your records, but you follow up any issues with outside agencies, such as children's services, in a timely manner when required. Staff are also well trained in safeguarding procedures, including how to report concerns.

Year 6 pupils who met with me told me they feel safe in school. Staff teach them how to stay safe, for example when using the internet. Pupils also trust adults in school and say that staff would respond supportively to any worries they might have. They also feel that teaching has improved since your arrival as headteacher. They said teachers give them work that challenges them and support them well when they do not understand a concept. They appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities that the school provides, which range from adventurous residential visits to table tennis and netball clubs.

Your actions to improve attendance have been effective. These include a range of rewards and a clear process for communicating with parents whose children are repeatedly absent. Attendance is currently above the national average because of your strategies.

The school's website does not fully comply with the government's requirements on information about the pupil premium funding or the primary school physical education and sport premium. However, technical issues beyond your control have been responsible for some of these omissions. Leaders have undertaken to rectify matters as soon as possible.

Morale among staff is high. Those who spoke with me said they appreciate the training they receive and feel it improves their skills and performance. This is a positive factor in the clearly improving quality of teaching and learning evident in the school.

External support

The local authority has provided effective support to the school in order to raise standards. It has made a helpful contribution to the recognisable picture of improvement by commissioning or directly providing guidance to improve teaching and the work of the governors. It also supported the recruitment process to replace the previous headteacher. The local authority now has increasing confidence in your leadership and the work of your team to deliver higher standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Quinn
Her Majesty's Inspector