

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Miss Jo Goman  
Greatham Primary School  
Petersfield Road  
Greatham  
Liss  
Hampshire  
GU33 6HA

Dear Miss Goman

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Greatham Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 27 November 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 its previous section 5 inspections. At its two section 5 inspections before the one that took place in November 2017, the school was also judged to require improvement.

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 good.

The school should take further action to:

- further reduce remaining variability of practice by refocusing sharply and specifically where improvements are less advanced, while allowing strengths to establish and embed.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your senior leadership team and governors to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also spoke with a representative of the local authority by telephone. Together, you and I made brief visits to six classes while lessons were taking place. As part of these visits, I took the opportunity to look at a range of pupils' work and speak with pupils and staff. In addition, I met with two groups of pupils with their books to talk to them about their work, learning and experiences of school. At the start of the day, I spoke informally with parents as they brought their children to school. I reviewed the school's current and previous improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and a recent report from the local authority. I also sampled other relevant documents, including records of your own monitoring activities.

## **Context**

The school has continued to enjoy a period of relative stability since the previous inspection.

## **Main findings**

Although disappointed in the outcome of the previous inspection, leaders and staff have moved forward with rekindled determination. The most significant change brought about by that inspection was leaders' realisation of just what Greatham pupils are capable of. Expectation, ambition and aspiration have all raised as a result. Rightly, leaders have raised the benchmarks of their minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress. Their explicit aim is to exceed these expectations as often and by as much as possible. It is evermore routine now for teachers to design tasks that provide scope for a growing number of pupils to reach the higher standard or work at greater depth. However, although this is improving, there remains scope for greater consistency of appropriate challenge for the most able pupils across subjects other than English, mathematics and, increasingly, science.

Despite successive judgements of requires improvement, inspectors recognised in November 2017 that the school had the capacity to improve. The school had stabilised after a period of high staff turnover that previously hindered the school's improvement. The inspection found that leaders were using a wide range of evidence to evaluate effectively the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders evaluated teaching accurately and offered incisive feedback to teachers. The senior leadership team was a cohesive and dedicated group, with middle leaders taking an increasing role in securing improvements. As a result, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics was already stronger.

Current evidence shows that that confidence in school leaders was well placed. Demonstrating resilience and commitment, the stable staff and leadership team has

continued to build on these successes and tackle weaknesses with renewed vigour. Promptly strengthening their existing plans in the light of the previous inspection findings, leaders have taken coherent and effective action to tackle the report's recommendations.

The 2018 key stage 2 outcomes represent a marked improvement compared with previous years in terms of both attainment and progress. This represents the cumulative effect of both current and previous improvements since staffing has stabilised, rather than a sudden recent upturn that the data alone might suggest. Last year's Year 6 leavers made much more consistently strong progress across key stage 2 in each of reading, writing and mathematics than their predecessors. Almost all achieved at least the expected standard. The proportion of most-able pupils achieving the higher standard across reading, writing and mathematics was more than twice the rate seen nationally.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving. There is greater clarity about the purpose of tasks, the learning they are intended to promote, and how this learning is being built through longer-term sequences of work. Frequent and targeted training for staff is making a difference, for example, in science. As a result, teaching is more effectively enabling pupils to build their knowledge, develop their skills and deepen their understanding over time.

Prompted by weaknesses identified at the previous inspection, leaders admit frankly that the systems they were using for assessing and tracking pupils' progress were overly complex and flawed. Consequently, they took decisive action to abandon these in favour of a simpler but more effective way of keeping a close oversight of how well pupils are doing. This action has already contributed to the improved outcomes at the end of key stage 2. Urged on by their raised expectations of pupils' capabilities, leaders are now rightly refining the use of these new assessment systems to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress in each and every year.

The behaviour system that was introduced shortly before the previous inspection has now had longer to take effect. It is popular with the community. Along with teachers' higher expectations, this behaviour system is helping to generate an increasingly focused and industrious atmosphere throughout the school. Also benefiting from better teaching, pupils are typically enthusiastic, engaged and at times excited by their learning. They demonstrate that they can conduct themselves appropriately in different styles of lessons and learning experiences, whether working under close adult supervision or not. Pupils report that behaviour is typically good, although in one or two classes some still feel that there is scope for even more focused concentration among pupils.

Previously effective governance has further strengthened. Minutes of governing body meetings show incisive interrogation of the new, more helpful, pupil performance information. Governors pose suitably probing questions of school

leaders. This includes follow-up questions to explore particular themes governors identify through listening carefully to leaders' answers. This tenacity is a common thread of accountability running through both governing body meetings and governor visits.

Leaders, governors and the local authority understand the importance of sustaining the current momentum until improvements are steadfastly secure. While reasonable progress has been made against all areas previously identified as requiring improvement, the priority now is ensuring that the weakest remaining practice is still good enough. For example, the standard of writing across the school, both of boys and girls, is undoubtedly significantly higher than at the time of the previous inspection. However, although some improvement is evident across subjects, the variability in the quality of written work remains greater in other subjects than it does in English.

### **External support**

The local authority has continued to provide effective challenge and support to the school. In particular, the curriculum and assessment expertise brought by advisers has had a direct and positive impact on the quality of education the school provides. This support has had the dual benefit of enhancing both classroom practice and the leadership capacity within the school to sustain and build further on improvements. It is the belief of the local authority that previous staff turnover had hindered the success of what were often well-conceived school improvement strategies. This is indicative of the authority's faith in school leaders, and its support has encouraged their resilience and determination to succeed.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Dunn

**Her Majesty's Inspector**