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10 December 2018

Claire Temple  
Headteacher  
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Wirral  
Merseyside  
CH46 9PS

Dear Ms Temple

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sandbrook Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 20 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 to 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.

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:

- improve attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average
- ensure that teachers more consistently develop pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics
- ensure that disadvantaged pupils make at least good progress in reading across key stage 2.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, a middle leader and members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. I also spoke with a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan and the school's self-evaluation document. I also looked at evidence relating to the recent checks that school leaders have made on the quality of teaching and learning. I visited all classrooms with the headteacher to observe teaching and learning and scrutinised work in pupils' mathematics books. I also listened to pupils from Year 3 and Year 6 read and spoke to older pupils about their experience of school.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection, three members of the teaching staff have left the school. Due to a fall in pupil numbers, these members of staff have not been replaced. The current Year 6 teacher is on secondment from a local teaching school.

## **Main findings**

You have taken firm action to address the areas for improvement identified at the most recent Section 5 inspection. Plans for improvement are detailed and you have set challenging targets that give a clear message to staff of your expectations that all pupils should make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

You were asked at the previous inspection to improve pupils' progress in reading and mathematics. You were also asked to improve attendance and develop the role of middle leaders in reviewing the quality of provision at the school. You have had success in addressing each of these areas.

The teaching of reading has improved. Strong and effective teaching in the early years and Year 1 ensures that almost all pupils develop a good understanding of phonics. The proportion of pupils passing the phonics check at the end of Year 1 was above the national average in 2018. Pupils also made better progress in reading across key stage 1 and key stage 2 last year. There was a significant increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of key stage 2. However, disadvantaged pupils made slower progress across key stage 2. More needs to be done to support these pupils to ensure that they achieve well.

The teaching of mathematics has also improved. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 more than doubled in 2018 but remained just below the national average. The work in pupils' mathematics books shows that they work hard and have regular opportunities to develop their ability to calculate accurately, using a variety of methods. However, in some classes, there is

little evidence of pupils using and applying their mathematical knowledge and skills to investigate and solve problems. This limits the overall progress that pupils make.

You have had some success in developing the role of subject leaders. They are now more involved in monitoring the quality of teaching than in the past. They are increasingly involved in the half-termly reviews, during which leaders look at the quality of provision in each class, make visits to lessons, look at pupils' books and analyse information relating to pupils' progress. You work with subject leaders to provide teachers with detailed feedback on the strengths in their teaching and any areas that could be improved further.

At the previous inspection, you were also asked to improve attendance. The deputy headteacher has worked effectively with other staff to stress the importance of regular attendance to both parents and pupils. As a result, there were improvements in overall attendance last year and a smaller proportion of pupils were persistently absent from school. Attendance has improved again this term and is significantly higher than at the same point last year.

Governors are highly committed to the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to improve further. They visit the school regularly and provide good levels of support and challenge to you and other school leaders.

### **External support**

The local authority has supported the school by brokering useful support that is helping leaders to make steady and sustainable improvements to the school. You are working closely with other schools in your local network. These links are providing opportunities to develop leadership at a number of levels. Through your close links with a local teaching school, you have secured the secondment of a Year 6 teacher, who is also providing additional leadership capacity and helping the school to further develop middle leadership.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow

**Her Majesty's Inspector**